Brazilian universities and teacher training in the web of the discourses: From the ideas to the framework concepts

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Abstract:

The text focuses on the first initiatives by the Brazilian Universities as regards teacher training in the 1930s, in the light of the models put into practice by the *Universidade do Distrito Federal* (UDF), created in 1935, and the *Universidade do Brasil* (UB), founded in 1937. By analysing the ideas imparted in the "instituting speeches" and "seminal speeches", the text identifies the guiding concepts that lay behind the construction of the two models. In the period of the New State, the UDF and UB projects were in opposite fields: the political climate did not allow a university to be run in an autonomous and free manner, which led to the closure of the UDF. The text is grounded on the theoretical framework provided by Fávero (1989), Gomes (2003), Lopes (2007) e Mendonça (2002. The methodology adopted in the documental analysis was based on the history of concepts as formulated by Koselleck (1992) and further explored by Jasmim and Feres Jr. (2006).

KEYWORDS:

Brazilian university and secondary school teacher training, Universidade do Distrito Federal, Universidade do Brasil, History of concepts.

TO START WITH: CHALLENGES, IMPASSES AND POSSIBLE PATH

This text is a methodological essay, with a view to getting closer to the object of the research that I focus on: training of secondary school teachers by the National Philosophy Faculty (FNFi), from 1939 onwards. The unit of analysis is the "instituting speeches" or "seminal speeches"; the presupposition is that through the ideas transmitted in these speeches it is possible to discern the clear framework concepts that led to the construction of the two models established for teacher training at higher education level in Brazil. To work on the speeches I used part of the formulations of Koselleck (1992), for research into the history of the concepts.

The readings I made left it clear that the training of secondary school teachers by Brazilian universities, between 1930 and 1945, involved a twofold challenge: the placement in a complex, contradictory, paradoxical period — the Vargas Era — and a considerable volume of academic studies reflected by the historiography. Therefore, it was necessary to make another incision: from within the period to "isolate" the pertinent issues relevant for the object, which lead to the two university models, the Universidade do Distrito Federal (UDF), created by Anísio Teixeira, in 1935, and the Universidade do Brasil (UB), created by Gustavo Capanema¹ in 1937, both located in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the then federal capital. The mention of the Francisco Campos Reform (1931) and the Gustavo Capanema Reform

(1942) complement the backdrop to the epoch, because both had undeniable repercussions on the educational policies drawn up in the aforementioned period, with specific impacts on the two universities and on the teacher training process. Another indispensable cornerstone to complete the backdrop is the emergence of the National Philosophy Faculty (FNFi), belonging to the *Universidade do Brasil*, which began to run the teacher training course for secondary school teachers, after the *Universidade do Distrito Federal* was disassembled, which had administered the first higher education teacher training courses, covering all levels of teaching.

The scenario which saw the clash of two different university projects (challenges) and their consequences (impasses) has led this text to take on the following format: to begin with, the question is contextualised through a dialogue among the authors; next, the discourses were analysed. To finish with, the final considerations are written.

ALONG THE PATH: THE NATIONAL STATE AND THE NATIONALISING BRAZILIAN SCHOOL. POLICIES, REFORMS AND LEGACIES FOR EDUCATION

The analysis of the issues I focus on herein aims to aid and lend consistency to the exercise proposed: the analysis of the "instituting speeches." This is because the actions that took place in the 1930-1945

period triggered a change in the paths of education in the country, despite the dark, repressive, authoritarian times, represented by an anti-liberal social organization model.

Perhaps because of this, Pandolfi (1999, pp. 9-11) believes that analysing that period in all its dimensions "means learning paradoxes and pushing away Manichaean temptations," owing to the absence of political rights and the precarious nature of civil liberties, the dissolved Parliament and the extinguished political parties. A series of measures were adopted that would bring about substantial modifications in the country in the economic sector, mainly through the processes that gave rise to industrialisation and occupation of urban zones. According to the abovementioned author, with regard to education there was an effort to foster "a strong feeling of national identity, which was an essential condition for the strengthening of the National State; the country invested in culture and education".

The installation of the Provisional Government in 1930, and the New State in 1937, brought a new format to the educational field and made it the target of many disputes. From that moment onwards the State apparatus was strengthened in the educational field, which enabled ideologies to be imparted that tended to prevent differentiated groups from organising themselves politically and which would constitute an impediment to the order and discipline that identified the ruling regime. The fact is the political project could not do away with the implantation of relevant social policies for the State, and as contradictory as it may seem, the investment was made in a discourse of legitimisation centred on the promotion of social justice that should be brought about through the application of legislation destined to instil social rights in Brazil. According to Gomes (2003) it was on behalf of the ideal of social justice that the State would create a policy of sheltering the Brazilian man, acknowledging that the civilisation and progress of the country would be the products of work and education. It is the articulation of the social policies in general and the education policies in particular, that shape a concept of education thought out in a broader sense, surpassing the formal education, as a pathway to construction of a people fully adapted to the social reality of their country, and prepared to serve it.

In this background, the attention was directed towards the young. According to Bomeny (1999, p. 147) youths occupied a place in the project of building the National State; the State was charged with "moulding their thinking, adjusting it to the new political environment, preparing them, at the end of the day, to live to be stimulated in the totalitarian State." The author points out that the essentially political content infiltrated into the National Organisation of Youth project, with repercussions in the reform of secondary schooling, given that it was at this level of education that mentalities were formed, i.e. the moulding of a new man who was adapted to the demands of the new regime. The fact that the State was omnipresent in the formulation of the education policies, especially in the secondary education reform, supplies an excellent key for reading the work of training teachers for secondary education.

In my readings of Bomeny (1999), Gomes (2003), Fávero (1989), Mendonça (2002) and Lopes (2007) it was possible to identify that, despite a lot of work, either through the path of literature, or through the path of the documentation, the question of changes in the educational field in the 1930s still throws up some reflections. Through the midst of differentiated angles and various outlooks, I understood that the cited authors have a "common thread": the "conflicts" and the "confrontations" are landmarks that identify the period and which lend meaning to the changes.

I appropriated three points of reflection by Fávero (1989) to ponder in the wake of the thinking of other authors and, based on their reflections, made my own. The first point is to understand the emergence of the institutions, the reforms, the founders and the managers within the context of a specific reality, and therefore, a close relationship with values, ideologies and/or other institutions of the society from where they emerge. The other point is to understand that a careful analysis of the events of 1930 and 1937 leads one to think of the two moments as steps in the same process, which is the same as saying that, "the spirit of the 1930 revolution only came about with the propagation of the New State" (Lopes, 2007, n.p.). The last point involves "power contracts", understood as articulations between groups that come together to divide the power between them.

The notes of Gomes (2003, pp. 452-453) concentrate on two big education reforms that mark the period of the first Vargas government: the Francisco Campos Reform (1931) and the Secondary Education Organic Law (1942), drawn up by Gustavo Capanema, both aimed at the structuring of secondary education in the country, and the "growing concerns in the debates that took place in the 1920s and which show in the organisation of the 4th Brazilian Congress of Higher and Secondary Education (1922), in Rio de Janeiro, clear evidence". The abovementioned author believes that the 1931 reform benefited from the climate of renovating ideas and that "there was already a strong conviction that changes at secondary school and higher education level would be inevitable, after the efforts made to transform primary education, during the 1920s".

Gomes (2003) clearly points out that the Capanema reform follows to a large extent what was instigated by Francisco Campos in 1931, which is in agreement with that observed by Fávero (1989) with regard to viewing the two moments as steps in the same process. The biggest innovation of the Secondary Education Organic Law in Gomes' opinion is the fact that it becomes compulsory to attend secondary schools, and the emphasis on humanistic teaching rather than technical subjects. Also part of the measures were professional courses, aimed at those who did not or could not go to university; professional teaching was geared towards the less privileged young and the establishments that ran the courses were forbidden from using the names ginásios (gymnasiums) and colégios (colleges).

The secondary education reform is viewed by Bomeny (1999) as one of the points of honour of the Capanema ministry; she comments that the guiding ideas of the reform show the framework that came out on top as regards the definition of what and how to teach the young at a crucial moment of their education in the quality of future professionals and citizens of a differentiated society. In explaining his reasons to the President of the Republic, Capanema warned that each subject programme would be marked, as much as possible, by the patriotic sense and by moral concerns. This was the profile of teaching individuals in a society called on to mirror the State. The confrontation mentioned above, humanist education *versus* technical education.

general and classic education *versus* professional education is understood by the abovementioned author as "opposition pairs (false opposition?) that until today remain as challenges to the secondary education reform" (Bomeny, 1999, p. 138).

The writings of Lopes (2007) and Mendonça (2002) focus on the confrontations and conflicts between groups and ideologies that ended up paving the way for definitive change in the teacher training model. The first author draws on the teacher training experience of the Universidade do Distrito Federal (UDF) and outlines the local political conditions that enabled the creation of a university granted autonomy as regards its administrative, and above all, its pedagogical aspects, which were managed by intellectuals whose wide-ranging ideological frameworks engendered a democratic climate, in turn leading to heated debate, with the centralising project defended by the federal government. One must point out the integrating characteristic of the training model thought out by Anísio Teixeira, to which Lopes attributes a commitment to the dissemination of knowledge, the incentive to research activities and the close contact with professional practice. It is obvious that this model was not in line with the thinking of the education policy makers who were in office in the Provisional Government, given that the university contrary to that idealised by the intellectuals of the 1920s — a propagator of disinterested culture — was placed at the service of perfecting secondary education, "an education level which is attributed the greatest importance owing to the fact that it aims to train individualities" that can steer the country (Lopes, 2007, n.p.).

According to Fávero (1989, p. 22), the UDF project was a stillbirth entity, because it hugely challenged "the capacity to be assimilated by the largest portion of the group that holds the political-social and economic hegemony of its time". However, Mendonça (2002, p. 174) sees the question from another angle and says that the UDF "continues alive among us as an idea, project and utopia" and places it in the condition of "an 'unfortunate' tradition, without doubt, but one which can and should be constituted 'on the ground' for our reflection and action". Based on these considerations one has to ask: was the teacher training model drawn up by the UDF "out of place", "out of order"?

At another moment Mendonça (2002, p. 154) clearly points out the differences between the two teacher training experiences in the 1930s: the expression of distinct national reconstruction projects and therefore retaining a relation of confrontation because they represented "the different conceptions about preparation of the elites, of their role and constitution, as well as the education of the people or the masses/education of the elites relation and the importance attributed to each of these poles in the country reconstruction process." Again, confrontation is the "overriding thread" of the discussion which in the case of the aforementioned author refers to two experiences, articulated to two different conceptions of the role and the destination of secondary education. At the end of the analysis there is a reinforcement of the relationship of opposition between the "Training University" of Anísio Teixeira and "the National University" of Gustavo Capanema, given that the differentiated conceptions that gave rise to the two universities and which modelled them "entail different forms of conceiving the role of primary and secondary education and consequently equally different forms of conceiving the place and the characteristics of the training processes of the respective teachers" (Mendonça, 2002, p. 154).

I think the training of secondary school teachers generated so many conflicts and confrontations chiefly because of the opposition between the two projects with different ideas about national reconstruction; there was a "third" project: the political--ideological project of Gustavo Capanema, which in reality was a nationality construction project in which the State played a central role. There is an extract of a letter2 in which Capanema forwards the Ministry of Education and Health project to Getúlio Vargas, which is especially significant: in a very firm tone he states that "it is indispensable that the Union makes its university a vigorous tool of order and equilibrium, an institution full of authority that, through the power of its elements, seduces the young and is able to guide their spirits towards clear and safe pathways." Without doubt, these ideas were at the root of Capanema's university project, which some authors considered the most ambitious segment of his educational project, and of course, the foundations of the project were instituted at the Universidade do Brasil.

The implantation of the National Philosophy Faculty is considered by Fávero (1989) to be part of a university policy project, devised in 1931 and consolidated in the New State. As regards the confrontations and conflicts represented in the texts, the National Philosophy Faculty was the installation hub of the "possible model" or "logical model", as I prefer to call it, of higher education teacher training, which with a few alterations is what we have today.

FINALLY, THE ANALYSIS EXERCISE

I believe it is necessary to clearly outline the steps taken in the analysis exercise, so as not to lose sight of the path. The first step was to establish a distinction between "ideas" — recurring categories of use in the texts of the discourses, and "framework ideas" — worked out ideas and meanings in the context of the discourses, i.e. the main guiding ideas behind the actions undertaken. In the following step — reading of the discourses — I identified the categories and moved on to the analysis.

As the head of the Ministry of Education and Public Health (1934), Gustavo Capanema spoke sporadically and it was only possible to work based on a summary published in the Jornal do Comércio, without neglecting to take into account the limitation this entailed. In any event, it was possible to identify the proud tone of the speech which was common at the time and a sense of mission contained in the sentence in which he declared justifiable emotion at being called to serve his land. In the midst of the 1934 Constitution, it did not cause any surprise to declare that Brazil had opted wisely "for a regime of liberty, i.e. for a regime of democracy", and "at the basis of a pure democracy one finds education as the core issue".

Throughout the speech, Capanema refers to other matters that guide his education project: the preparation of the elites who would lead the country, the preparation of the masses who would act vigorously and also needed to be prepared so that their actions had a constructive sense and a spiritual orientation. This was the twofold pact of education in the modern world: training of the elites and preparation of the masses. At the end, Capanema declared that he would work "aware of his own limits", saying that

he would not implement grandiose innovations, as he is going to work within the reality in a big centre of intellectual elaboration. Despite the limitations of the analysis, one can glean the centrality of education in the nationalisation project.

Capanema's speech on the occasion of the Centenary of the Colégio Pedro II, made in the midst of the New State (2/12/1937) leaves no doubt about the path that would be given to education. After the harsh criticism of the New School Pioneers and their ideas, he says that "education, in Brazil, has to now place itself definitively at the service of the Nation (...) and when we say that education must be at the service of the Nation we mean that it, far from being neutral, should take advantage of, or rather should adopt a philosophy and stick to a set of values, it should remain in line with the system of moral, political and economic directives that form the ideological basis of the nation, which, as such, are under the guardianship, control or defence of the State". Education should prepare man not for just any action in society, but for a "necessary and defined action so as to construct a moral, political and economic unity, which integrates and empowers the Nation".

This instruction/concept runs through the whole of the speech and the repetition of the categories of "Nation", "State", "ideology" and "moral" spin a web of meanings that leaves no doubt about the direction in which education should go, which under a hierarchical scheme had a clear mould: under the governance of the State, everyone should be ready to serve the Nation. In one perspective that I was happy to classify as "coherent", the big focus was on the young. As such, secondary education was charged with "forming the personality, physique, morals and intellect of the adolescent" and "the cultural character of secondary education was accentuated, so as to become truly teaching that would prepare the intellectual elite of the country" Encyclopaedic teaching, of a sterile nature, and the "solid studies of the classical humanities" were given priority.

In the same discourse, Capanema reinforced the training of teaches for secondary education as an overriding need. It would be up to the Federal Government to found and maintain the special establishments for this purpose, through the organisation of the "National Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and

Literature, which among other functions would include training secondary school teachers, integrated into the *Universidade do Brasil*, the foremost institution 'of higher education". In the words of his mentor the university was "destined to be the biggest centre of studies and research in our country, in order to construct a true standard, which would permanently establish the type, raise the level, perfect the pedagogical directives of the other higher education institutions of the Republic".

The ideas and concepts transmitted by the two speeches lead me to some considerations made by Jasmin and Feres Junior (2006) when they refer to the "double critical impulse" which brought about the start of the History of Concepts. The first of them concerns the propriety of establishing a text/context relationship, and the second deals with ideas as constants, articulated with different historical figures, but they are themselves fundamentally unchangeable.

On the first (text/context relationship) the comment concerns the change of Capanema's positioning in the two moments that marked the discourses: In 1934, the State was responsible for establishing a liberal and modern order, strengthened in the steering of the economic-social sphere. In 1937, it was a time of complete political-ideological repression. Only as such can one understand the use of expressions like "a wise option", "for the regime of liberty", i.e. "for a regime of democracy". Another aspect to note is in the 1934 speech, Capanema says he was "called to serve his land", and in 1937, the category "Nation" is used exhaustively; having changed the tone of the discourse, one of the "framework concepts" was constructed, which mapped out the paths that education would take until 1945.

On the second point, allow me to carry out an "interference" in Koselleck's proposal: in the speeches analysed the ideas have nuances, although the historical figure was the same; the ideas were not fundamentally different. What made them different was the way of expressing them, which left no doubts as to the meaning that was attributed to them.

In 1935, Afrânio Peixoto and Anísio Teixeira spoke about the solemnity of the installation of the UDF courses. Afrânio Peixoto, the university rector, gave a glimpse of the battle he would wage further down the line between the two universities

and denied a relationship opposing UB, in the creation of the UDF. In proclaiming, "here and now education: it is immediate pragmatism. But there is more and better: this will come about, through the research," which is present in some ideas that were at the conceptual foundation of the UDF, whereby this research would "no longer be an individual effort made by some self-taught individuals, but the popular and collective extension of cultures, which shall be the Brazilian culture, given the example, always fertile through contagiousness and imitations." Other expressions used in the discourse such as "disinterested and professional teaching", "university spirit", "cultural unity", "clarified awareness through culture", "universal spirit" are intertwined and outline the space that prioritises the training "of the future and definitive teachers," all of whom are Brazilians, with the masters being, "the first products of University. These Brazilians, the masters of Brazil".

Based on the vision of university as the disseminator of human culture, Anísio anticipates the UDF model: "a university whose faculties aim to prepare the intellectual backbone of the country", "of cultural goals, it will seek to develop knowledge in all its aspects, aspiring to transform it into the great centres of scientific, literary and philosophical irradiation of the Country" and "envious of the conquests achieved by freedom of thought and criticism". The UDF, dedicated to culture and liberty, was born "under the sign of the sacred, which would work for and fight for a Brazil of tomorrow, faithful to the great liberal and human traditions of the Brazil of yesterday".

The two discourses contain keywords that embody some of the bedrocks on which the UDF was built, as outlined earlier: "cultural unity", "teaching through research", "university spirit" and more specifically in Anísio's discourse, "liberty", "autonomy" and "culture". Beyond the obvious, in the defence both make of the model represented by the UDF, some aspects must be pointed out: one of them is the meaning Anísio attaches to the Family, the State, the Church and the School — "four great fundamental institutions that construct and condition life in common of the people" as well as "maintaining, nurturing and ordering life in common", they form an amalgam such that "the history of any of them is, to some extent, the history of humanity". Another

aspect is the connotation given to knowledge and culture which man should serve, in order not to imprison himself, but to be able to undergo intellectual training in an autonomous and free manner, with the facility to criticise.

I decided to highlight these aspects to enable a summary of the ideas transmitted in Capanema's discourses which marked the installation of the UDF courses. To do so, I am grateful to another of Koselleck's observations (1992, pp. 134-146), which says "that as soon as a word is used with a specific meaning and with a reference to a reality, it is unique". In other words, in empirical terms, concepts should not be attributed meanings that are not related to their experiences. In the discourses analysed an example is given by Capanema's use of "Nation", "State", "Land", "Family" and "Morals", taken as values to be followed and fundamental postulates of the nationalising education destined to the formation of the patriotic conscience. In Anísio's discourse, as already mentioned, the meaning attributed to the Family, the State and the School is the embryo, the structural foundations of individuals.

The other example refers to the bases established for the actions in the educational field: Capanema emphasised the idea that education was at the service of the Nation, stating that the civilisation and progress of the country were products of work and education, and therefore it was necessary that formal education was the route chosen to construct a people adapted to the reality and ready to serve the country; he had in the actions proposed for the young, the best example of this. In Anísio's discourse, liberty, autonomy, education with research and culture were pillars upon which the faculties of the UDF would prepare the intellectual backbone of the country, which was the same as saying that it was the Nation that was served through education.

To sum up, although both use the same terms, they become unique in each of their discourses because the meanings these terms are attributed are referenced in different realities: what Capanema and Anísio Teixeira thought education and university should signify.

Upon the inauguration of the National Philosophy Faculty (FNFi) in 1939, the Minister Gustavo Capanema and Alceu de Amoroso Lima spoke to the teaching staff. The content of Capanema's

speech was revealed by the title: Culture and the Spirit, Bases of the Nation. The minister acknowledged that the faculty would begin to function without thorough preparation, and declared that the Government through the efforts that had to be made hoped to see "the great facility of the National Philosophy Faculty, equipped and organised in the most appropriate manner, and inside it, among the experienced teachers, the joyful youth attracted by the noble profession of teaching and a liking of culture". Hence, the FNFi was born, with the goal of perfecting, guiding, disciplining, in its general foundation, the culture of the country; the expectation was that the faculty and its example would result in crucial influences for the whole educational body, from the primary sector to the university branches.

Alceu's discourse repeatedly mentions the terms culture, national and nationality - categories that underpin the expectations he had with regard to the FNFi. In reality I think these speeches, which were delivered in the proud tone of praising the nation and the construction of nationality, expressions taken from the text explaining the reasoning behind the institution to the President of the Republic, lie behind the organisation of the National Philosophy Faculty. In the part of the text dedicated to secondary education the FNFi was the strong arm of inculcation of the ideology of the authoritarian State and maintenance of the status quo, supplied by the hegemony of the Central Power. The teachers and only they would be allowed to "teach in the secondary schools", and the teaching of humanities would be undertaken following a method and standards of excellence, which they should attain so that "the young are provided with that solid and honest spiritual grounding which will make them adept in general for life, and especially to enter into higher education institutions, destined to train the highest level and most perfect cultural groups". As the future teachers were recruited from secondary education, it was a closed cycle: it was the "upright youths" who would replicate the model and model other youths further down the line.

On the occasion of bringing together the first class of the National Philosophy Faculty, in 1942, Capanema's speech is completely focused on the mission of the secondary school teacher. The categories "mission" and "nation" punctuate the whole speech, and reinforce the proposal from the National State that "the teachers teach, prepare the generations of adolescents and of the country, for the superior experiment of their human and patriotic destiny". This insistence on drumming home the mission of the teachers made Capanema underline the need to perfect the profession, and "to throw your heart and give all the impulses of the soul to the task of educating the segments of the young who have been delivered to your guardianship and direction". This was the condition needed to achieve the goals of secondary education to train the intellectual, moral and civic personality, form and strengthen the character of the pupils, lend "the young the feeling of nationhood as a land of their ancestors". Secondary education was given the vocation of teaching the humanities.

FINALLY, THE DOUBTS, QUESTIONS AND OTHER PATHS

Having closed the exercise of analysis, two aspects of the history of concepts spring to the fore that have proved useful to me because they allow the objectives I proposed to be complied with. The first is about the need to establish concepts that constitute specific vocabulary — semantic fields or linguistic domains — of the political and social language, relating the concepts used in the discussion among the groups that sustain or contest them, which was achieved by trumpeting the categories that were most prevalent in the discourses. I observed that, although they appear in the linguistic domains of Anísio and Capanema's discourses, the categories were thought out in a reciprocal relationship of changes in the meanings.

The other aspect that complements the prior one is the "temporal layers" — a single expression with many meanings linked to it. In the discourses, "university spirit", "universal spirit", "patriotic conscience", "clarified awareness through culture", are lent to this operation, given that they are concepts regardless of their original format, which accumulate a variety of meanings over time, as can be observed in the discourses.

What particularly caught my attention in the discourse that closes the analysis is the firmness with

which Capanema transmits the ideas, proposals and the central concepts, the framework concepts that were at the basis of the construction of the Universidade do Brasil, in the creation of the National Philosophy Faculty and which were guidelines for the teacher training course for secondary school teachers. Considering that at this time he had already been at the head of the ministry for eight years, and a change of regime was impending, one sees no evidence of the wear and tear that usually occurs upon the occupation of a public office post for a long period of time. I attribute this fact to the Capanema's enormous capacity for political articulation, the power contracts that gave "stability" to the groups that remained hegemonic, the political instruments supplied by the New State. However, I believe Capanema's university project did not go beyond the ideological landmark that identifies

it up until today: it transformed into a flagship, an ideal. Without neglecting the evident gap between Capanema's dream and its implementation, Gomes (2003, p.456) says that the public university system in Brazil was not enhanced as much as it was damaged — "the marks of a highly centralising and bureaucratic project" — an aspect that leads him to acknowledge that "the re-democratisation of 1945 and the transformations that took place in the country and its educational system since then, would not change some of the basic original characteristics of its design".

It is questions such as these and many other doubts that have led me to rewrite the path from the organic model to the "logical" model and study the implications the change brought about in the training of secondary school teachers by the National Philosophy Faculty.

Endnotes

- 1. Minister of Education and Health, from 1934 to 1945.
- 2. FVG/CPDOC Rio de Janeiro (references from letters and discourses) of Gustavo Capanema and Anísio Teixeira.

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