

Book reviews

Ó, Jorge Ramos do & Carvalho, Luís Miguel (2009). *Emergência e Circulação do Conhecimento Psicopedagógico Moderno (1880-1960): Estudos Comparados Portugal-Brasil*. Lisboa: Educa/Unidade de I&D de Ciências da Educação

Thinking about the modern educational discourse as regards its genesis and consolidation on a national and worldwide scale implies compiling the archaeology of various discursive devices that articulate among one another in the theoretical problematisation on the pedagogical practice, tied into the affirmation of the modern Nation-States. Therefore, the compared analysis of two realities from a common linguistic-cultural framework throws up, to the historical eye, the discussion concerning the configuration of an “educational internationality”, whose paradigms allow one to think out the school institution and its practice at the heart of the construction of collective and subjective identities.

This problem has been systematised in the *Emergência e Circulação do Conhecimento Psicopedagógico Moderno (1880-1960): Estudos Comparados Portugal-Brasil* [Emergence and Circulation of Modern Psycho-Pedagogic Knowledge (1880-1960): Portugal-Brazil Compared Studies], written by Jorge Ramos do Ó and Luís Miguel Carvalho, where the modern school landscape is scrutinised, both from the point of view of the relationship between the psycho-pedagogical discourse and the government of the soul, and with respect to the process and effects of the cross-referencing of diffusion dynamics and active reception of this knowledge, made legitimate under the aegis of psychological science.

Indeed, Psychology has been the main driving force behind the elevation of the Education Sciences, between Philosophy and Law, insofar as it supplied the theoretical contributions, the techniques and the instruments for

the grasping, assessment and guidance of the pupil, and one can paradoxically say, it presents itself as a “tailor-made school” in the background of development of a school of the masses. In this context, the whole architecture of the study and government of what was defined as the “problem-child” is generated, which was preferred ahead of the so-called “normal” for the understanding and implementation of educational action, in the production of healthy and participatory/active citizens.

The appearance, in turn, of the international New School movement led to the expansion of the ideal which was built on “integral education” that paved the way for the modern psycho-pedagogical discourse, which “transfers the emphasis of the pedagogical action from the *knowing* to the *being*”, i.e. from the instruction given by the teacher to the determination and willingness of the pupil to be educated, shifting the objective problem of the pupil’s freedom to a subjective space of moral conduct whereby, through the *culture of the self* and self-discipline, the pupil conquers his autonomy and the inherent responsibility.

Selfgovernment arises, as such, based on a set of *technologies of the self*, based on principles of the scientific-experimental knowledge of intelligibility of the reality taken as the truth, and made possible through the creation of institutional entities that legitimise and develop this operational logic in the educational and legislative contexts in an attempt to regulate the population, both in the micro plan, and the macro-social sphere.

By convening a vast number of experts from other areas of knowledge who, above all within the delineated historical curve, thought out, wrote and regulated the pedagogical practice, and through analysis of the tools produced by these experts, Ramos do Ó maps out a vision, under the concepts coined by Michel Foucault, on the building of the rationalisation of the pedagogical

discourse. As a hybrid product, this, in turn, becomes a generator of shaped characters in the process of the modernisation of the Nation-State that allows the researcher to show the homogeneous configuration, by the countries under analysis, of an economy of government within “a single same *knowledge-power* of the pupil”.

Hence, the possibility of grouping together lines of thought and action of the modern pedagogical discourse in Portugal and Brazil resulted in the widespread circulation and diffusion, above all through the press, of theoretical support documents coming from various sources that triggered, in the two countries, the appropriation of educational concepts and models that could be articulated and systematised empirically in the search for effective tools of the *thinking-doing* school. These are corroborated by the existence of shared perceptions and educational problems common to the different social and cultural realities, which end up generating standardised models of educational organisation and cultural formatting, thus leading Luís Miguel Carvalho to state “modern educational reason is part of and the result of the reciprocal penetration of international discourses and organisations with the national discourses and agencies implicated in the educational sector” (p. 159).

It is from this perspective that Carvalho analyses the consecration of an *educational ideology* disseminated through discourses and institutions of a scientific and/or political nature that aim to materialize the semantics of modernity on an international scale, simultaneously inseparable from the building of the Nation-State that absorbed it. The relationship between a global project of change and its reception and adoption by local powers, is empowered through the *educational Esperanto* concepts, which contain in themselves the idea of a globalisation of the pedagogical discourse, marked by sympathy for the ideas of the New Education, and *indigenous foreigner*, based on Tom Popkewitz, an expression that serves to explain the dynamics of the circulation of universal categories and the respective incorporation, rewriting the systems of meanings at the core of the creation of a local discourse.

The comparison between the Portuguese and Brazilian discourses is the product of the confluence of models extrinsic to them. Carvalho starts from the compared analysis of two journals from these countries — *Revista Escolar* and *Educação*, respectively, considered as central vehicles of the specialised knowledge of the educational space and whose discursive map comprises a narrative concerning the educational problems and solutions, which inevitably are mirrored in the political decisions

and actions, always in the background of extolling the ideas of the “active school”, in opposition to the so-called traditional paradigm of the school of earlier times sustained on the elitism of the bookish culture.

In the context of construction of the school, the individual and the State, and in tandem with the proliferation and enrooting of this *educational Esperanto*, the problem arises from the emergence of the technologies of the government of the pupil’s conduct. These are embodied by the prescription of pedagogical components in the plan of the programmed contents and objectives, above all the cultural and social dimension of the individual and his physical and spiritual maturing. The question of physical development as the promoter of moral hygiene, analysed by Ramos do Ó, is taken up again in the subsequent chapter by Carvalho when dwelling on the example of Ling Gymnastics, which at the end of the 1930s was presented as the complete pedagogical reference, in other words as the instrument for the self-determined development of the pupil, who as such converts himself into an archetypal *model-citizen*.

The construction of a national school rhetoric at the core of psycho-pedagogical modernity encompasses, therefore, both the incorporation of the foreign models of the emerging scientific-experimental knowledge, and the dynamics of circulation of the same discursive formations that placed the pupil’s conduct and *culture of the self* at the centre of their concerns. Hence, the school institution could be designed as a “natural form of political-social organisation” based on the work of subjectivation it undertook with its actors.

INÊS FÉLIX

inez.felix@gmail.com

Studying a Master’s in Artistic Education

at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon

Translated by Thomas Kundert

Félix, Inês (2010). Review of “Emergência e Circulação do Conhecimento Psicopedagógico Moderno (1880-1960): Estudos Comparados Portugal-Brasil” [Emergence and Circulation of Modern Psycho-Pedagogic Knowledge (1880-1960): Portugal-Brazil Compared Studies], from Jorge Ramos do Ó and Luís Miguel Carvalho [2009]. Lisboa: Educa/Ui&dCE. *Sísifo. Educational Sciences Journal*, 11, pp. 115-116.

Retrieved [month, year] from <http://sisifo.fpce.ul.pt>