



## On the encounter of health with education: The new school and its developments in discussion

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**ABSTRACT.** Based on Foucauldian ideas, the present study aimed at analyzing the discursive games established on the encounter between health and Brazilian pedagogy from the 1920s – encounter which was featured by escolanovismo. Therefore, we analyzed, at first, some books from the Bibliotheca de Educação collection, carried out by key authors of the Movimento Escola Nova (New School Movement), in which emerges the primacy of that cognition would be subjected to pertinent procedures to brain physiology. In a second moment, we investigated academic papers in a set of contemporary educational journals dedicated to criticise hygienists, ideological or normative biases supposedly inherent to the New School, whose analyses have proved captive of a denunciatory approach to the relations of power-knowledge in force; these relations, according to the examined authors, generated unfailing pathologizing effects to school practices. As a conclusion, we suggested an analytical turning able to put into question approaches based on a priori notions, such as development, enlightenment and representation in favor of reflections focused on the uninterrupted game between subjective processes and veridiction policies that outline the current educational field.

**Keywords:** New school, bibliotheca de educação, Michel Foucault.

### Do encontro da saúde com a educação: o escolanovismo e seus desdobramentos em debate

**RESUMO.** A presente investigação, apoiada em noções foucaultianas, tem como objetivo analisar os jogos discursivos sediados no encontro entre os campos da saúde e da pedagogia brasileiras a partir dos anos 1920, encontro este protagonizado, sobretudo, pelo escolanovismo. Para tanto, foram analisadas, no primeiro momento, algumas obras da coleção Bibliotheca de Educação a cargo de autores-chave do Movimento da Escola Nova, nas quais avulta o primado de que a cognição estaria subordinada a processos pertinentes à fisiologia cerebral. No segundo momento, procedeu-se à sondagem, num conjunto de periódicos educacionais contemporâneos, de estudos dedicados a criticar os vieses higienistas, ideológicos ou normativos supostamente inerentes ao escolanovismo, cujas análises mostraram-se cativas de uma abordagem denunciadora das relações de poder-saber ali vigentes, tendo estas, segundo os autores recensados, gerado indefectíveis efeitos patologizantes às práticas escolares. À guisa de conclusão, aventou-se um giro analítico capaz de pôr em xeque abordagens apoiadas nas noções apriorísticas de desenvolvimento, esclarecimento e representação, em favor de reflexões voltadas ao jogo ininterrupto entre processos de subjetivação e políticas de veridicção que demarcam a atualidade educacional.

**Palavras-chave:** escola nova, bibliotheca de educação, Michel Foucault.

### El encuentro de la salud con la educación: el escolanovismo y sus desdoblamientos en debate

**RESUMEN.** La presente investigación, apoyada en nociones foucaultianas, tiene como objetivo analizar los juegos discursivos presentes en el encuentro entre los campos de la salud y de la pedagogía brasileñas a partir de los años 1920, encuentro protagonizado, sobre todo, por el escolanovismo. Para tanto, fueron analizadas, en el primer momento, algunas obras de la colección Bibliotheca de Educação a cargo de autores-clave del Movimiento de la Escuela Nueva, en las cuales intensifica lo primado de que la cognición estaría subordinada a procesos pertinentes a la fisiología cerebral. En el segundo momento, se procedió al sondeo, en un conjunto de periódicos educacionales contemporâneos, de estudios dedicados a criticar los sesgos higienistas, ideológicos o normativos supuestamente inherentes al escolanovismo, cuyos análisis se mostraron cautivos de un abordaje denunciador de las relaciones de poder-saber allí vigentes, teniendo

estas, según los autores censados, generado indefectibles efectos patologizantes a las prácticas escolares. A modo de conclusión, se expuso un giro analítico capaz de poner en jaque abordajes apoyados en las nociones apriorísticas de desarrollo, esclarecimiento y representación, en favor de reflexiones dirigidas al juego ininterrumpido entre procesos de subjetivación y políticas de verificación que demarcan la actualidad educacional.

**Palabras clave:** Escuela nueva, bibliotheca de educação, Michel Foucault.

## Introduction

In the contemporary Brazilian educational debate, abound analyses derived from the encounter of discourses of the field of health with statements in circulation in the pedagogical field. This encounter, it seems to us, is an example of the usual practices in the history of Brazilian education, at least from the 1920s.

The analysis here focuses on the effects of subjectivation generated by this encounter, taking as hypothesis that the forging of the educable subject, from the beginnings of the New School, has at its core a combination of the psychic and biological dimensions in the constitution of the individualities that occupy the school universe.

Thus, we focused first on compiling the ideas of some authors present in the Brazilian New School movement with the purpose of listing certain connections of sense used as north for a series of pedagogical statements in use at the present time. We point out that some of these connections - which are attributed to schoolchildren as part of their nature - rely on a set of procedures that are based on the comprehension of the human body as a structure in permanent improvement and, consequently, in constant deficit through what it could have become.

In short, we argued that, since New School education has taken its role to establish a biopsychologically oriented discourse, modern education has never ceased to engage in self-verifying gestures (Ó, & Carvalho, 2009) and, therefore, to live with the belief that the student's body consists of an incomplete universe that can be corrected.

## Modern education and the management of the deficit body

Searching the historiography of the Brazilian education, we find vigorous criticisms directed at the biopsychic advice in circulation in the school. Cecília Hanna Mate (2002) argues that the biological bias of educational reformism in the 1920s and 1930s was based on state actions, whose implementation was justified through a grand project of 'streamlining' of the school system. Thus, the historian asserts that the concern of the New School leaders regarding student achievement,

efficiency, and productivity was subjected to comprehensive strategies of forecasting and control via statistics and standardization.

A line similar to that of Mate is subscribed by authors such as Micael Herschmann, Maria Helena Souza Patto, Heloisa Helena Pimenta Rocha, Jerry D'avila, Margareth Rago and José Gonçalves Gondra, among others, particularly when they reflect on the relationship between education and health. In their research, these relationships were analyzed in terms of 'hygienization' (Rocha, 2003); of 'medicalization' (Herschmann, 1996); of 'stigmatization' (Patto, 1999); of 'racism' (D'avila, 2006); of bourgeois 'imaginary representation' (Rago, 1985); and also of the 'capture' operated by medical knowledge (Gondra, 2004). These elements would have been presented in a coherent way with a perspective in which a medical speech would inspired a national plan devoted to include references of padronized behavior on child. The purpose of such planning would have been, according to the above mentioned authors, to construct future citizens, always docile and useful, for the industrial work that was then structured in the main cities of southeastern Brazil.

We believe that such approaches remain subject to a partial analysis about the games between knowledge and power present in it. One finds in these approaches formulations according to which a social class would impose its view of the world and, consequently, would generalize standards for the whole society, whose adoption by the oppressed ones would upset their apprehensions of the real in favor of representations of the ruling classes.

Thus, notions such as 'scientificism', 'elitism', 'hygienism' and 'stigma' were treated in the abovementioned historiography as formulations imposed by a medical discourse that would have extrapolated its jurisdiction, establishing pathological representations experienced in the reality of educators and learners.

In the wake of Foucault's analysis, we position ourselves adversely to such approaches, since we take the medical allocation present in the modern educational environment as statements exposed to intensive games of veridiction and subjectivation.

From this perspective, it would be theoretically counterproductive to narrate the medical allocations

housed in the school environment as direct effects of prejudices, mismatches or impostures, since such speeches, as we have speculated, should not be treated as distortions in which there would have been a supposition already said, or even some unspoken implicit in the constitution of such narratives.

We operate with a notion of truth that urges us to speculate on the effects produced by the frictions of the discourses with the processes of subjectivation that they convene. Inspired by the analytic gesture established by Foucault in the courses taught at the end of his life (Foucault, 2010a; Foucault, 2010b; Foucault, 2011b), we contemplate the veridiction games embodied in the discursive practices of modern pedagogy with the aim of situating them on the course of a long history of what can be outlined as “[...] a discourse of truth that the subject is able to say about himself” (Foucault, 2011b, p. 5).

Avoiding to analyze the discourses as an aggregate of representations produced by the subjects in their conflicts with the reality, we propose to visualize the modern students in the simultaneous condition of artificers and artifacts of themselves, whose tools are forged in the encounter of each one of the individuals with the truths established by biopsychological knowledge.

In this way, we start to consider that “[...] there is only knowledge insofar as, between man and what he knows, it is established something as a singular struggle, a ‘tête-à-tête’, a duel” (Foucault, 2001, p. 26, emphasis in the original).

Of the different ways in which the modern experience related to each individual’s clash with the discourses offered, we cut New School discursive practices as a key moment in which they took their place in the veridiction games undertaken in the encounter of pedagogical procedures with the organic life of learners.

### The prospective New School psychopedagogy

Voluminous is the universe of documents with which one come across when is investigating the modern exchange of health with education. Through such documentary mass, we have focused on two groups of speeches, whose production and circulation have proved fertile to show the contingency and malleability of pedagogical speeches backed by biological factors. To do so, we took statements distant in time in more than six decades, aiming to put into perspective the process of creation and critique of elements that became recurrent in the modern educational process.

The first of them – related to the 1920s and 1930s – had as a mote the political and pedagogical

performance of Lourenço Filho, a character presented by the historiography of the Brazilian education as the central point for the formulation of the biopsychological bias in the approach to school learning. The second set of statements outlined was constituted by the grouping of articles published in post-1996 academic journals, taking as a descriptor the exchange of notions such as ‘New School’, ‘hygiene’, ‘medicine’, ‘health’, ‘clinical’ and ‘psychology’, present in analyzes dedicated to the connections between health and education in the Brazilian school modernity.

Let us deal with the first enunciative body. It is referred to in the work of Lourenço Filho, eminent pedagogue, bachelor in law, doctor and bureaucrat in the days of Getúlio Vargas. His performance in the installation of the modern school in Brazil was intense and profitable. From a life dedicated to education, we cut the protagonism in the edition of the *Bibliotheca de Educação*. This one, published between 1927 and 1979, had its golden phase in the decades of 1920 and 1930 (Monarcha, 1997), when exponents of the educational, psychological, juridical and sociological fields wrote organized volumes with the purpose of establishing “[...] scientific bases of teaching, from the functional genetic point of view of their organization, already from the point of view of the social and moral purpose to which the elevation of man, as a citizen and as a man should tend” (Lourenço Filho, 1927p. 4).

This ‘elevation of man’ led to the gathering of works in which a ‘moral education’ (Doria, 1928; Durkheim, 1929) would be combined with a ‘tailor-made’ teaching (Claparède, 1928), whose operation ‘from the inside out’ (Ferrière, 1929), in turn, would produce an ‘interesting’ (Dewey, 1952, Marques, 1936) and ‘useful’ (Cresson, 1931) schooling. Thus, we observed in the pages of the 25 volumes of the *Bibliotheca* discursive connections whose exchange would have attended the projects, at the same time, emancipatory and sanitizer of modern educational thought.

In this collection, one observes the constant concern of the thinkers with the establishment of methods to take care of the will in the students; a concern that in almost all cases was related to the implementation of an education in fact renewed, because ‘interesting’, ‘active’ and ‘democratic’.

Connecting notions such as will, individuality and sociability, these authors treated them as natural properties of mankind. In doing so, they proposed that, because social life is indiscernible from psychic individuality (Claparède, 1928), it would be the task of the school to stimulate the student to assume a ‘physiological responsibility’ (Doria, 1928), where

intelligence would command the will and would prepare the student for a cooperative social life. In this stratum of the New School movement, education should take on the task of directing the volitional expression of the learners so that their capacity for reasoning is capable of producing a 'healthy' development (Ferrière, 1929), creating the conditions for the infant to orient his behavior towards to that expected for his age.

It was, in short, to arouse the natural interest as a prerequisite for developing supposed physiological mechanisms of intelligence, whose activation would guide the student towards healthy living: this is a concern that has rarely been absent from educational debates.

In addition, we observe in the aforementioned documentary sample the forging of the interdependence between intelligence and learning, in a way that is coherent with a scientific perspective for human nature and for the educational act. In this perspective, investigating the *Bibliotheca de Educação*, we find the meeting of authors considered classic by historiography to institute what until today is defined as of the order of the psychic processes of the cognition.

Among the skills required for learning, intelligence has been set up as fundamental. To establish its mechanisms, researchers associated with laboratories of experimental psychology were dedicated to measuring gestures that would lead them to describe cognition from the notion of development of intelligence. With the same intention, the pair Binet and Simon (1929), established tests to measure the intelligence coefficient, Piéron (1927), applying psychophysics to establish normal patterns of mental reactions in front of controlled stimuli, as well as Lourenço Filho (1937), preparing tests to assess the maturity necessary to begin literacy.

Thus, from the perspective of these experimental psychologists, learning would be the product of mental processes whose activation would be triggered by gestures required by the social environment in which the assessor/assessed pair was inserted. According to this discursive logic, the medium would be incorporated into cerebral physiology, and its proper functioning would depend on both the correct stimulation performed in the external environment and the balanced development of the internal structures.

Therefore, inherent to this logic, the notion of the development of intelligence was established as one of the visible and therefore modifiable elements of cognitive action.

In the words of the *Bibliotheca de Educação*, the developing nature of infants would be based on biological structures (Domingues, 1929), which would come from the genetic inheritance (Geenen, 1929) and would be transformed according to the succession of ages. Regarding that mental processes expanded over time (Proença, 1928), the authors of this collection recurrently suggested that it was the school's task to preserve the students' freedom so that this physiological progression would move evenly toward the adult condition.

Consequently, it remained for teachers to tailor their demands to the different capacities of their learners. It was then proposed that the educator should act as maintainer of enthusiasm, initiative and interest, so that the natural potentiality of individuals could be manifested from the inside out and in its fullness (Ferrière, 1929).

At the meaning, Lourenço Filho's companions defended that education should focus its methods on the promotion of freedom. Free should be play and social interaction; even the choice of curricular components should be oriented towards the promotion of the student's autonomy. It was suggested that a free school would allow the development, in all students, of scientifically verifiable and therefore natural capacities (Dewey, 1952).

Once at an age suitable for schooling, infant development would continue toward the maximization of intelligence, and this would allow a balanced socialization, whose apogee, according to some of the authors of the collection, would lead to the full exercise of democracy (Dewey, 1952; Luzuriaga, 1934; Kilpatrick, 1933). Thus, we locate an axiom deeply rooted in modern education, expressed by the triad intelligence-sociability-development, whose catenation would lead to the emancipation of the human.

Thus, following the production of the *Bibliotheca de Educação*, we would say that an influential segment of the Brazilian New School operated with a notion of human nature according to which the physiological allocations would be intimately connected to psychic and social instances. We attribute to this connection the core of what would henceforth be self-proclaimed as the modern conception of school. We further suggest that when the behavior of schoolchildren was definitively decomposed into biopsychological processes, all their actions gained predictability, either by focusing on the genetic determination of the flesh or by expressing idiosyncratic souls. Hence, if they were captives of their hereditary tendencies, were confined to social dictates, modern students should

be encouraged to develop their individualities freely, and thus to perform the fullness of their biopsychological nature.

Few modern educators would disagree with the belief in the unfathomable expansion of biopsychic boundaries driven by particular arrangements of human sociability. Nevertheless, we would argue that such a certainty would bring the perception of the permanent incompleteness of being produced by the biopsychologically founded statements as the complementary opposite of the power for development.

From the point of view of the New School movement, we extract the fact that, by amalgamating sociability, intelligence and development, this pedagogical movement allowed, once and for all, that education produced a utopian notion of humanity and, at the same time, demanded an environment conducive to all sorts of compensation, care and therapy applicable to both regular and 'abnormal' students, both visualized as entities in a perennial developmental process.

#### Health and education in contemporary academic discourses

Assuming that the link between education and health, since the 1920s in Brazil, would have tied the definition of cognitive processes to the notion of development, and therefore to that of deficit, we have collected an extract of contemporary educational thought to assess if this basis would have kept or moved to other connections, when contemporary authors dedicated themselves to thinking the scientism attributed to the New School.

It is noteworthy that there are repeated condemnations to psychological tests, to normalizing policies, to domination/resistance play, and to distortions and elitist representations. Such contestations, in their vast majority, oppose the quantitative character of evaluations, associating them with national projects anchored in errors, deviations and omissions, that is, in negativities. However, we will not address what such analyzes deny, preferring to focus on the discursive productivity of the very instance of criticism, which would allow us to describe the origins and recurrences - created at the New School moment and perpetuated in the present - of the notions actually constituted in the encounter of education with health in modern pedagogical discourse.

To do so, we compiled 56 scientific articles published in educational journals between 1993 and 2013. These are specific publications of the pedagogical field, selected based on the criteria

established by the QUALIS system of the Brazilian Coordination for Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes). With such criteria, we selected 18 journals evaluated as A1 and A2, which would attest the circulation and the attributed quality of publications, as well as ensure that the selected articles presented signed, practiced and recognized hypotheses in academic circles. They are: *Cadernos CEDES*, *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, *Currículo sem Fronteiras*, *Educação em Questão*, *Educação em Revista*, *Educação e Pesquisa*, *Educação Temática Digital*, *Educar em Revista*, *Educação & Realidade*, *Educação & Sociedade*, *Perspectiva*, *Práxis Educativa*, *Pró-Posições*, *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*, *Revista Brasileira de História da Educação*, *Revista de Educação Pública* and *Revista Educação (PUCRS)*.

The tracking of the texts was based on the following keywords: 'New School', 'hygiene', 'medicine', 'health', 'clinical' and 'psychology'. The choice of such terms succeeded an initial screening in which the sense links established by them were presented as fertile ground for analyzing the effects of the friction of New School discourse with the sciences of cognition, particularly when the knowledge was revisited by the pedagogical intelligentsia of the present.

A significant number of articles have dealt with the discursiveness of the New School movement in a paradoxical way. On the one hand, it criticized the bourgeois character of the movement, suggesting distortions and manipulations, both in the discursive practices of its main authors and in the historiography dedicated to exalting it. On the other hand, it re-read such works and interpreted these analyses with the purpose of situating in their exteriority - constituted by the time when urbanization and industrialization emerged in the large Brazilian cities - the conditions of possibility for the emergence of democratic ways of conviviality.

These authors, whose emphasis here is given to Marcus Vinicius da Cunha (1996, 1999), consider that the search for the rationalization of the educational system and, consequently, the eagerness for the efficacy of its practices, carried the scientificity contained in the New School discourse towards to a mostly instrumental use of the procedures it produces. Starting from this supposed deviation of route, Cunha proposes to revisit the thought of John Dewey - in his appropriation of Anísio Teixeira, his divulger in Brazil - with the objective of establishing the American author as a diametrically opposed reference to Lourenço Filho and to the psychometric perspective.

Correcting the excesses of Lourenço Filho and maintaining the association of learning with the maturation of mental processes, Cunha's reading of Dewey's theories allowed him to establish that cognition would only be performed when an intimate operation occurred in the subjectivity of the learners, which is: the conquest of rationality in the social struggle.

In suggesting that replacing Lourenço Filho's theses with those of Anísio Teixeira and Dewey would promote the fullness of the educational gesture - expressed by the maxim of the perpetual 'learn to learn' - Cunha insinuates a view that defines the democratic way of life as the culmination of cognitive skills development process (Bortolotti, & Cunha, 2013). The school observed from this point of view would be the environment in which full psychic development should be encouraged, provided that the experience shared therein was organized enough to consider the interests, to stimulate the capacities and, finally, to promote the free exercise of reason. Cunha, in criticizing psychologism as a limiting factor of democratic education, distances himself from what he considers the formalism advocated by Lourenço Filho. However, he conditions the conquest of democracy to the need to potentiate reason and capacities by stimulating the students' interest.

The presence of the medium as a constituent of a psychic structure, whose imbalance would lead to cognitive inappetence, was also highlighted by authors who were concerned to ponder the effects of psychoanalysis discursive practices in the composition of the procedures adopted by the New School.

This was the path taken by Ronaldo Aurélio Gimenes Garcia in an article dedicated to analyze the contributions of Arthur Ramos and Anísio Teixeira in their struggle to "[...] reduce social differences and actually develop a democratic practice" (Garcia, 2006, p. 66).

According to Garcia (2006), Arthur Ramos would have been key piece in the defense of a democratic school, because he would have stood against school normalization. Ramos, in Garcia's reading, had distinguished the terms 'abnormal' from 'problematic' and therefore differed from those who had school difficulties in two groups: on the one hand, there were the abnormal ones whose school inadequacy would come from constitutional and biological factors; on the other hand, the problematic ones - in a complete majority - whose inadequacy would originate from social factors, basically of family matrix.

To substantiate his enthusiasm for Ramos's ideas, Garcia (2006, p. 73) values the fact that the "Escolanovista" (is the term applied to followers of the New School Movement) establishes that "[...] the term problem is much more related to the social conditions that the underage lives and that makes difficult the attention and learning capacity". That is, even minimizing biological factors in relation to psychosocial factors, Ramos, like Garcia, would have made it possible to understand learning by reason of attention, and this as a natural capacity stimulated by the contact of the individual's interiority with his experiences. Therefore, the medium would be, in this interpretation, elevated to the condition of constitutional factor of the learning. In addition, Garcia goes so far as to attribute to Arthur Ramos the idea of "[...] that the medium is the decisive element that shapes the behavior of the people, so they cannot be directly responsible, in the case the misfit students, for their attitudes little acceptable" (Garcia, 2006, p.73).

Adopting a similar prism, Fabíola Sircilli (2005) dedicated herself to historicize the participation of the pair formed by Anísio Teixeira and Arthur Ramos in the struggle against the supremacy of the psychological tests used in the detection of learning problems. According to the author, these tests would have succumbed to standardization, and their hegemony would have been marked by the performance of Lourenço Filho in the New School movement.

In his analysis, Sircilli contrasts with the educational principles disseminated by Lourenço Filho because they have incorporated a so-called 'Taylorist method' designed to "[...] control the work of teachers" (Sircilli, 2005, p. 188). This method would justify the massive use of psychological tests, since, according to the author, this resource was used to rationalize the teaching work, proceeding to the "[...] subordination of the individual to social ordinations" (Sircilli, 2005, p. 188). Thus, in Sircilli's reading, the medium for Lourenço Filho should prevent the prevalence of individualism, establishing, concurrently, both standardized criteria of conduct and abnormal beings, according to these criteria.

The use of psychoanalysis, according to Sircilli, could have changed the way in which educators evaluated the relations between the social environment and the composition of learning problems. If, for the said Taylorists, the medium was a factor of homogenization, for the hygienists, led by Arthur Ramos, the medium was the space of expression of "[...] particularities and special needs" (Sircilli, 2005, p. 189). The author concludes that

the great contribution of mental hygiene to the referral of students with school difficulties was that “Ramos considered that these children had been ‘abnormalized’ by their medium, from the point of view of the adult, in an unconsciously sadistic attitude of parents and educators” (Sircilli, 2005, p. 191, emphasis added).

Therefore, in the author’s view, as in Garcia’s analysis (2006), an important legacy of the New School could be expressed by the principle according to which to modify the individual should be interfered with the environment where he/she lives, since the abnormality would be caused by an incorrect conduction of family experiences from childhood.

The influence of the family and social constellation in the learning process was also subject for the article by Francisco Moura and Talitha Elen Silva (2009). According to the authors, the New School, by shifting the center of educational concerns from the content to be taught to the subjectivity of the student, would have created the conditions for the introduction of psychoanalysis within school practices.

The centrality of the learner would have made it possible for the school to become fundamental for the emergence of an education, in fact, a clinical. Thus, considering that “[...] the school institution and, especially, the teacher and classmates are substitute characters of the ‘family orbit’ in which the child will begin to deposit residues of incomplete situations” (Moura, & Silva, 2009, p. 268, emphasis added), the researchers place the space where educators should interfere to establish a clinical school where it would be performed the integrality of the subject “[...] implicit behind each individual” (Moura & Silva, 2009, p. 267). The peak of this process would be reached, according to the authors, when one could “[...] arouse the desire for the learner’s knowledge” (Moura & Silva, 2009, p. 269).

Edna Silva (1998), also convinced of the clinical character of the school environment, studied it in terms of the role played by sexuality in the “[...] rational and emotionally balanced and emancipatory construction of the individual” (Silva, 1998, p. 131). In order to do so, the author began a discussion in which she defended the alliance between medicine and pedagogy in order to make possible the “[...] formation of the citizen” (Silva, 1998, p. 129). The medical-pedagogical mission, according to the author, would be fulfilled when said amalgamated knowledge acted decisively against a supposed scientific tradition that, from previous times, treated

the biological factors as determinants with respect to the construction of the subjectivity.

Another group of authors envisaged the statements produced in the exchange between medicine and education during the New School movement as representations of reality. In this other approach, such statements would be forged from a major project for the ‘sanitizer’ of the Brazilian people (Rocha, 2011).

According to the author’s considerations, the poor population was the main target of such impositions, since their habits would keep it in degeneration. Therefore, the hygienic discourse analyzed by the author predicted that the health promotion was used as a condition to save the entire nation through education and inculcation of habits in the poorest.

José Gonçalves Gondra and Inara Garcia (2004) also analyzed the capture of childhood by the medical-sanitary discourse in terms of imposing habits on the poor. Collecting theses approved by the Faculty of Medicine of Rio de Janeiro since the mid-nineteenth century, the authors demonstrated how the representations of the poor children were established in association with the notions of abandonment, error, immorality, weakness, etc. That is, in the opposite direction of the country that the future doctors wanted to formulate.

In the same direction, Heloisa Helena Pimenta Rocha and José Gonçalves Gondra (2002) published an article in which they test the hypothesis that the onslaught of the medical discourse on the body of the post-19th century student should be backed by the idea that such a look would contemplate “[...] constituted representations about the physical body of the students” (Rocha & Gondra, 2002, p. 494). From the empirical study analyzed, the authors point out that the Novecentist Brazilian doctors, when they immerse themselves in the educational field, would have designed a previously established itinerary, containing a regenerative mission instituted by said professionals. In a complementary way, they point to an alleged surveillance mechanism present in school hygiene manuals produced in the 1920s. In summary, the authors’ pair formulates that medical knowledge, when directed to the school, would be oriented to “[...] maintain and expand its legitimacy to care for individuals and society” (Rocha & Gondra, 2002, p. 510).

Similar to almost all the compiled scholars, Gondra and Rocha also fix their perspectives on the exteriority of the discourses they analyze. In them, students’ bodies would be mere keepers of medical statements, which would use student body as a space

for expression of representations produced in an elitist and corporate environment. Therefore, they disregard positivities supposedly expressed by the ideal link between childhood and future, education and care, medicine and social redemption, etc.

These analyses seem to reduce greatly the reflection on the polarity of power/resistance, in which the pole of power would produce discourses that overcame the reality actually lived by the 'populars'. In the case of the narrow scientism attributed to the movement by New School, this approach would, as we suppose, restrict reflection to denunciation of the deceptions and untruths produced by the powerful against the oppressed.

For our part, we suggest that the New School Movement, in addition to attending to obvious class interests, would have carried out an even more penetrating action, capable of constituting a specific way of addressing the student, evoking a profoundly modern treatment, both in revolutionary and conservative discourses. This discourse constitutes the belief that educability would be constitutive of the human being himself, since this would be completed as he learned. In addition, the itinerary for the formulation of a human body - at the same time incomplete and in development - is the same path traveled by medical knowledge when assumes the task of protecting society from the risks inherent in the health of individuals. That is, a hygienic education corresponds to a medicine that is both providential and social.

When pedagogy begins to operate with a notion of human nature parallel to that of medical knowledge, as we have argued, much more than distortion is produced; it imposes itself on the learners as a model of intelligibility of their own intimacy. In the wake of this notion, students are urged to locate their interests, their desires and their responsibility to humanity in their own physiology.

In almost all of the 56 articles compiled, the medical-pedagogical actions directed to the body of the scholar were read from the perspective of diversion, manipulation, capture or even imposition. In a similar way, how the agents of historiography dedicated to New School operate, also the analysis of the periodicals contemplate reality/representation binarism when they approach the subjectivity produced in the clash of scientific discourses with the individualities. Still, they maintain some essentialities whose operation would result in the belief of a subject always present. This conception of subjectivity considers that the social life of the students would lead them to the conquest of a specific individuality whose forge would result in

the dynamic amalgamation of the psyche with the medium.

We insist that, in contemporary analyses, psychism is described from analogous references to those employed by the promoters of the New School in establishing their theories about learning. In both cases, the infant psyche emerges as a set of structures whose proper functioning would depend on the correct operability of its elements. In addition, the notion of current development, like yesterday, has never stopped populating the speeches addressed to cognition, where the decomposition of learning in mental processes presents itself as a construct maintained throughout historical time.

In contemporary reflections, we observe great homogeneity in the manner in which the looks are established for the students' bodies. In rare instances, it is denied the need to produce sufficiently scientific knowledge, whose application would reconcile education with its responsibility for the healthy development of the individual and, at the same time, the improvement of the democratic way of life. With regard to the health of the individual, few authors fail to consider the psychic balance. When they talk about sociability, the researchers exalt the democratic experience, just as, when they talk about mental processes, they reiterate respect for the different individual potentialities.

Thereby, whether it is criticizing elements of the New School pedagogy or denouncing the supremacy of medical power, contemporary educational discourse seems to treat the knowledge-power relation of the biopsychological speeches addressed to the school in terms of an overdetermination of the medical and psychological powers in relation to the pedagogical ideology. In this case, learners inexorably become sources of conceptualizations that ultimately victimize them.

### Modern processes of subjectivation

In the Western culture, since at least the seventeenth century, the profusion of conceptualizations dedicated to scientific knowledge of the human being can well be ordered by the subjective identification of each one to this discursive formation. From the sea of possibilities that modern experience expresses, preoccupation with subjectivity seems to have been the option adopted since Kant attributed to man a dual role: producer of knowledge and, at the same time, creator of himself in the process of knowing (Foucault, 2011a).

Nonetheless, Foucault's researches following the investigations into Kant's anthropology lead us to suggest that Kant's man, by representing the world



from his perceptions, was by the work of the historians of science – particularly those dedicated to studying the language, biology, and economics after the nineteenth century – converted into the script by which a universal subject could be revealed, whose appearance would express the human desire to locate within nature. In this sense, modernity, as Foucault proposed, would have supported all the assumptions about biological, environmental and linguistic elements in terms of both factors for understanding the human and conditioning factors for his life, always considering man as the only capable entity to visualize oneself while leading the game of speculation between words and things (Foucault, 1999).

We assume that it is to this ideal of subject that refers the sample of contemporary educational thought scrutinized in this article: a character that, after all, produces little of unusual. At the limit, this view of the processes of subjectivation seems to be concerned only with resistance, whose visible expression would be a virtual resilience of individuals to practices considered pedagogical and politically anachronistic.

Such a perspective is evident in the way in which the academic journals are addressed to the authors they have taken as classics of the New School moment. There, the formation of two great theoretical groups was evidenced, on the one hand, by Lourenço Filho and, on the other hand, by Anísio Teixeira, Arthur Ramos, Piaget and Dewey. It seems to us that the first group was blamed for corrupting a clear and auspicious New School threshold because of political, social and corporate interests of the pedagogical authorities. The second group was given the responsibility of perpetuating the struggle for rupture with traditional education, rescuing the heroic times in which the New School contemplated the emergence of a scientific education. In this way, the characters of the second group are presented as expressions of resistance, whose theories evoked the return to the immaculate origin of modern and democratic education.

It was evidenced in the abovementioned articles that the New School would have been an inaugural moment in the making of a rational and progressive view towards the educational act. Trust in the competence of psychologists, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, sociologists, philosophers, psycho-pedagogues, etc. in defining the structures underlying cognition was present both in the works housed in the *Bibliotheca de Educação* and in the sample of the coeval criticism to the New School Movement.

In our reflections, the “Escolanovistas” aspired to scientifically control educational experiences through the invention of a profusion of methods derived from the knowledge available in their time. Current critics of the New School movement seem to agree with this analysis. However, this vision locates in Lourenço Filho the one who would have succumbed to bourgeois ideology and placed all the gains of pedagogical modernity in the service of oppression, marginalization, standardization, docilization, etc. In short, this educator would have redirected a redemptive movement in a direction contrary to its origin. In this way, such contemporary thinkers would have attributed to the alleged opponents of Lourenço Filho the status of icons of insubmission, that is, those on the shoulders of whom all the possibilities of resuming the primordial project of modern scientific education expressed by the safe conduct of each would be supported of the learners to the self-realization as subjects.

We suggest that on this analytical course lies the explanation for the demarcated argumentative monotony we see in compiled articles, supposing that it occurs because of a perpetual search for a transcendent being, whose description would guarantee the understanding of all human educability. Being said, formed by a psychic and physiological structure recognizable and describable by the communion of the different specialties that go to him, would remain in potency within each of the humans, being sufficient the correct routing of his capacities so that it was realized in all its magnitude.

It turns out that such being, from the Kantian theories, was considered as unattainable; hence all efforts of science to delimit it would be partial. Thus, in the light of the New School conceptions present in the sources analyzed by us, we affirm that in the forged space between the present of the developing student and the future of the rational adult to which he is addressed, a myriad of disabilities and deficits would be installed. In the context of these faults, the discourse of the experts emerges, defining that the conscience of their own limitations would be the correct way to overcome them.

Moreover, it seems that all the current considerations compiled here, as well as the very evocations contained in the *Bibliotheca de Educação*, operate in harmony: through the creation of enlightenment, as sophisticated as possible, so that each and every subjects recognize in themselves the distance between their duty to be and the

prescriptions established by the expertise for the achievement of cognition.

### Final considerations

In the sample of academic statements we have scrutinized, there seems to be no alternative but enlightenment. Such statements problematize the educable individual as being confined to a language that oppresses and deceives him. The modern student in this perspective would be instigated to take refuge in a general condition of a human being in perpetual conflict with himself. Encouraged to be aware of the inherent capacities of his nature, he is therefore urged to expand them by means of a subjective opening to the collective, which is taken as an instance in which the ultimate truth and the unambiguous sense of what constitutes it.

This eliminates the possibility of creating a possible game of creative production of oneself. The freedom of the modern scholar, as we have seen in the analyzed empiricism, has long become the motto through which the rational capture of the infinitesimal eventuality of his behavior has been operating.

Disregarding the instituting game between the modes of subjectivation and the policies of veridiction, typical of any experience, the aforementioned analyses, with regard to the thematic quadrant here in question, seemed to be markedly partial, since they were, more often than not, restricted to point to a north towards which all creatures of good will should walk. In this perspective, this future would take place when, finally, the medium and the individual turn to the full accomplishment of the subject who has always been present, but who has never been able to take effect.

Thus, in order to problematize the pathological and politically debilitating character of this belief, the educational debate could, in our view, overcome the habit of analyzing the scientific-pedagogical discourse that surrounds educational practices in terms of impositions, representations or manipulations, considering that which escapes regularity, not with the aim of triggering abnormalities or resistances, but in view of the productivity present in the unusual and erratic, whose emergence is only insinuated when viewing the educational experiences in terms of disputes and crossings in the demand for truth.

In this way, we feel that repositioning the educational discourse towards a critique that eliminates all the pretensions of emancipation and enlightenment of the school protagonists would

allow new displacements of meaning, harboring, perhaps, unsuspected ways of facing the discourses that demarcate our modes of existence at schools.

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