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The Antinomy of the Mortal and Immortality in Education

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ABSTRACT – The Antinomy of the Mortal and Immortality in Education.

This paper to show how the activity of education in the modern world is linked to the Arendtian philosophical project. Starting with a brief exposition of the reading hypothesis proposed by Paul Ricoeur, I first intend to highlight the ethical-political sense of the Arendtian philosophical project. For Ricoeur, the investigation carried out by Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition* can be read as a philosophical anthropology, that is, as a genre of meditation that seeks to identify the enduring traits of the human condition that can resist the vicissitudes of the modern world. Next, I will try to explain the unfoldings of this interpretation in order to think about the antinomy of mortal and immortality in the field of education, since the central question of philosophical anthropology, according to Ricoeur, lies in the intimate disproportion of our temporal condition as mortal beings.

Keywords: Education. Immortality. Common World.

RESUMO – A Antinomia do Mortal e da Imortalidade no Âmbito da Educação. Este artigo busca mostrar de que maneira a atividade da educação no mundo moderno está vinculada com o projeto filosófico arendtiano. A partir de uma breve exposição da hipótese de leitura proposta por Paul Ricoeur, primeiramente, pretende-se destacar o sentido ético-político do projeto filosófico arendtiano. Para Ricoeur, a investigação levada a cabo por Hannah Arendt em *A Condição Humana* pode ser lida como uma antropologia filosófica, isto é, como um gênero de meditação que busca identificar os traços perduráveis da condição humana, que podem resistir às vicissitudes do mundo moderno. Em seguida, tenta-se explicitar os desdobramentos dessa interpretação a fim de pensar a antinomia do mortal e da imortalidade no âmbito da educação, uma vez que a questão central da antropologia filosófica, conforme Ricoeur, repousa na desproporção íntima da condição temporal dos seres mortais.

Palavras-chave: Educação. Imortalidade. Mundo Comum.

The ethical-political meaning of Arendt's philosophical project

In¹ the preface to the second French edition of *The Human Condition*, published in 1983 under the title *Condition de l'homme moderne*, Paul Ricoeur (2016) seeks to interpret the gap between the two works that gave Hannah Arendt her fame and recognition as a political thinker. Against the perplexity of interpretations that saw in this gap nothing more than “[...] an inexplicable change of register [...]”, Ricoeur (2016, p. 05) maintains that there is a fundamental relationship between *Origins of Totalitarianism* and *The Human Condition*. With this reading hypothesis, Ricoeur seeks to weave the thread that enables a link these works that, both from a thematic and methodological point of view, are too distinct. In this sense, the guiding line of the Arendtian philosophical project, according to Ricoeur (2016), consists in thinking, on the one hand, what were the conditions of possibility for the emergence of totalitarian movements and regimes and, on the other hand, under what conditions it would be possible to build a non-totalitarian world.

First of all, it is necessary not to neglect “[...] the character of political thought that is expressed there [in this supposed gap], its essentially problematic path [...]”, that is, the task of understanding an absolutely new reality from categories that were bequeathed to us by a tradition of political thought that proves to be insufficient (Ricoeur, 2016, p. 08-09). And here it is opportune to remember that, for Arendt (2012, p. 12), understanding did not mean describing a phenomenon by means of analogical and generic procedures; much less denying the infamy of what had happened, as if everything had been nothing but a nightmare of enlightened reason, but rather it has to do with “[...] facing reality without prejudice and with attention, and resisting it – whatever it may be”. That is why, according to Ricoeur's interpretation, Arendt would have turned to the elements that crystallized in this new reality, that is, to the origins of totalitarianism, seeking to understand the political events that deeply marked her time.

It is worth asking, then, how our political thinker sought to understand, in her philosophical project, the emergence of totalitarian movements and regimes. According to Arendt (2012), totalitarianism must be considered as an absolutely new event. That is, the totalitarian phenomenon could not be understood through analogies or generic comparisons that would take us back to some past political experience (Arendt, 2012). Nor could it be explained in the light of determinist theories, because, in Arendt's philosophical project, as Newton Bignotto (2001, p. 42) point out, totalitarianism “[...] comes from the creative condition of human being, from his ability to invent new orders and establish new ways of organizing life in common”. However, Bignotto (2001, p. 42) continues, one cannot affirm that the totalitarian phenomenon is “[...] a direct consequence of the exercise of human freedom [...]”, since, for Arendt (2008, p. 347), “[...] totalitarianism is the most radical denial of freedom”. This means, according to Bignotto (2001, p. 42), that the totalitarian phenomenon arises precisely from the “[...] fundamental in-

determination of our condition and, therefore, it cannot be definitively removed from the human horizon”.

Arendt's analyses of totalitarianism will show that totalitarian movements and regimes emerged from a specific historical constellation and, even though their elements may not have completely disappeared after the collapse of Nazism and Stalinism, they can never repeat themselves in the same way as they crystallized in the past. Inserted in the order of contingency, like everything that belongs to the realm of human affairs, totalitarian movements and regimes cannot be explained by a mere description and concatenation of elements that amalgamated in a given historical conjuncture. If that were the case, it would be possible to identify such elements in the present – which would be absolutely possible today – in order to glimpse, in the near future, the resurgence of totalitarian systems, as if they necessarily resulted from the presence and articulation of these elements. “Nothing could be further from the way our thinker understood the task of the political thinker and the nature of totalitarianism” (Bignotto, 2001, p. 41).

If, for Arendt, our categories of political thought proved insufficient to understand the emergence of totalitarianism, how is it possible to think, for example, the experience of the concentration camps? In recognizing the uniqueness of this political event, Arendt sought to face this reality without prejudice and with attention, in order not to confuse the totalitarian phenomenon with any of the political experiences of the past. For Arendt, one cannot recognize the uniqueness of an event without making distinctions. Unlike interpretations that sought to explain totalitarianism through analogies and comparisons, Arendt (2012) insists on the fact that it was necessary to conceptually distinguish totalitarian regimes from all sorts of dictatorships and tyrannies that existed in the past. Although fear and violence were present in all of them, the distinguishing feature of totalitarian systems consisted in the use of ideology and terror as central elements of this new form of domination. In this sense, according to Adriano Correia (2014, p. xxi), to conceptually think the conditions for the emergence of an unprecedented phenomenon, it is necessary to identify the novelty that characterizes it, so that “[...] thought must operate rather by clarification via distinction than by analysis via association”.

For our purposes, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that Arendt's political thought states “[...] form the contingency of the event to the irruption of the concept” (Ricoeur, 2016, p. 11). In this sense, we could say that the concept of totalitarianism is forged by Arendt in order to understand how the invention of a fictional world², in which reality is replaced by the internal coherence of the elements that made the logic of an idea operate, was possible. “Ideology treats the course of events as if it followed the same ‘law’ adopted in the logical exposition of its ‘ideia’” (Arendt, 2012, p. 624). The invention of a fictional world created by propaganda and massive dissemination through the media allowed totalitarian regimes to implement a gigantic terror apparatus, the concentration and extermination camps, in which it was possible to verify the premises of totalitarian logic. Only in these scientifically controlled

laboratories, the concentration and extermination camps, could human beings be fully subjected to the supposed law of Nature, in the case of Nazism, and to the supposed laws of History, in the case of Stalinism. “Seen through the prism of ideology, the camps even seem too logical” (Arendt, 2012, p.606). This fictional world, as Hannah Arendt’s (2012) analyses showed, presupposed the monstrous assumption that everything is possible, everything is allowed. According to Ricoeur’s interpretation (2016), it is precisely from this point that one can understand the connections between the *Origins of Totalitarianism* and *The Human Condition*: if the horror and infamy of totalitarian systems start from the premise that everything is possible and everything is allowed, it is necessary, traveling in the inverse path, to ask what are the obstacle to the verification of this monstrous hypothesis.

Now, if the concentration and extermination camps emerged in this fictional world created by totalitarian systems, serving as scientifically controlled laboratories in order to conduct experiments and modify what totalitarianisms understood as human nature, we must now ask under what conditions it is possible to build a non-totalitarian world (Arendt, 2012). In other words, “[...] under what conditions is a non-totalitarian world possible? According to which presuppositions do human beings cease to be superfluous?” (Ricoeur, 2016, p. 14). In Ricoeur’s interpretation, these are the questions that guided Arendt’s new investigation in *The Human Condition*. For the French philosopher (2016, p. 14), this work should be read, in the Arendtian philosophical project, “[...] as the book of resistance and reconstruction.”

In light of this interpretation, it is possible to comprehend the change in the way Arendt tried to understand the totalitarian phenomenon. If, in *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt showed how racism, anti-Semitism and imperialism crystallized and made possible the emergence of totalitarian systems, it is only in *The Human Conditions* that the author will think under what conditions a non-totalitarian world can be built. For Ricoeur (2016), this is the fundamental question that was left open by Arendt in her first great work. “Having left pending these properly political implications [in *Origins of Totalitarianism*], notes Ricoeur (2016, p. 14), Arendt’s new investigation needs to be understood and judged on the same plane on which it was held by the author. Thus, according to Ricoeur’s (2016, p. 15) interpretation, *The Human Conditions* can be read as a philosophical anthropology, that is, “[...] an investigation that aims to identify the most durable features of the human conditions, those that are least vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the modern era.” This reading hypothesis seeks to emphasize the temporal features of Arendt’s analysis of the activities in which human beings are actively engaged in the world. Although the French philosopher’s interpretation stress the temporal aspect of Arendt’s analysis, it does not neglect the centrality of space in Hannah Arendt’s thought. According to José Sérgio Carvalho (2019), this emphasis sustained by Paul Ricoeur in his interpretation of the political meaning of Arendtian thought finds support in the last lines of the Prologue of *The Human Condition*, since, according to Arendt (2015, p. 07), one of her goals in this new investigation

was to analyze those “[...] general human capacities that come from the human condition and are permanent, that is, that cannot be irretrievably lost until the human condition itself changes.”

Therefore, according to Ricoeur’s interpretation (2016), the new investigation carried out by Arendt in *The Human Condition* maintains a bond of filiation (*lien de filiation*) with her first great work. For Ricoeur (2016, p. 15), this change of plan was necessary to resolve the question left open in *Origins of Totalitarianism*; to resolve what could be called, according to Ricoeur’s (2016) reading, “[...] the epistemological impasse of *Origins of Totalitarianism*.” This impasse pointed to the paradox in which totalitarian systems could only verify their premises by means of concentration and extermination camps. That is, the totalitarian hypothesis that one could change human nature depended on the installation of a gigantic terror apparatus; on the construction of death factories and oblivion pits in order to verify the superfluity of human beings.

According to Ricoeur (2016), faced with this epistemological stalemate posed by the totalitarian logic in which, only under certain conditions everything was allowed and everything was possible, Arendt would have sought to establish the fundamental lines of her new investigation from an ethical-political frame. One can conjecture that this displacement from the logical-epistemological to the ethical-political frame would have caused some perplexity in her interpreters. If, in the work *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt showed how the destruction of the common world allowed its replacement by a fictitious world in which the monstrous premises of totalitarian regimes could be verified, then *The Human Conditions* should be read, in effect, as a work of resistance and reconstruction (Ricoeur, 2016). It is only in her second great work that Arendtian analyses point to the conditions according to which it would be possible to reconstruct the space of appearance and visibility in which each mortal beings can reveal personal identity through acts and words; can confirm unique and singular appearance to the world as someone who never existed before one’s birth and will never exist after one’s death. In other words, the reconstruction of a space between human beings in which each one can reveal to others one’s unique distinction is indispensable to resist the totalitarian attempt to make human beings superfluous. It is, therefore, from this stalemate that arises from a logical-epistemological frame, in *Origins to Totalitarianism*, that Arendt would have extracted a philosophical criterion to carry out her new investigation from then onwards, according to an ethical-political frame (Ricoeur, 2016). This criterion, according to Ricoeur (2016, p. 15, italic by the author):

[...] corresponds exactly to the question left unanswered ten years earlier: under what condition is a non-totalitarian universe possible? If the totalitarian hypothesis is that of the absence of stability of human nature, that of the possibility of changing human nature, the most appropriate criterion for the new research [in *The Human Condition*] must consist in an evaluation of the different

human activities from the temporal point of view of their *durability*.

Aware of the danger of an interpretation that, instead of emphasizing the critique of the modern era as Hannah Arendt's main contribution to contemporary thought, the French philosopher stresses what could be called "[...] the trans-historical character of the analyses of further support from the very composition of the Arendtian work. According to Ricoeur (2016), the fact that, despite her repeated incursions into the problem of modernity in the first five chapters, the author has dedicated a sixth and final chapter in *The Human Condition*, explicitly linking the analysis of *vita activa* and the modern era, would justify a reading that seeks to emphasize the temporal aspect of the new Arendtian investigation.

From the standpoint of *The Human Condition*, Ricoeur (2016, p. 16) notes that the distinction between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* is "[...] the implicit presupposition of the entire work, which will not be addressed head-on until his posthumous and unfinished work *The Life of Mind*. "Thus, for the French philosopher, to this distinction are subordinated the other fundamental distinctions of *The Human Condition*, namely, the distinction between public realm and private realm; and the distinction between labor, work and action. According to Ricoeur (2016, p. 16), these three categories that correspond to the central chapters of *The Human Condition* should not be understood in the Kantian sense, that is, as "[...] throughout their multiple mutations, retain a kind of flexible identity that authorizes designating them as enduring features of the human condition" (Ricoeur, 2016, p. 16).

If we can identify in the Arendtian philosophical project a philosophical anthropology, according to Ricoeur's interpretation (2013; 2016), it is because our political thinker displaces, from an ontological-metaphysical frame to an ethical-political frame, the specific and revealing problem of this kind of meditation. That is, it shifts the problem of the nature or essence of man, which takes us to the experience of the eternal, to the problem of the intimate disproportion of our temporal condition as mortal beings, which takes us to the experience of the immortal. In this sense, the distinction between labor, work and action is the fundamental line that delimits the anthropological problem outlined by Arendt in an ethical-political plane and that points to the antinomic structure of the human, which stretches between a pole of finitude and a pole of infinity (Ricoeur, 2013). Therefore, warns Ricoeur (2013), it is necessary to consider it dialectically from both poles, that is, not from the limited, but from the antinomy of the limit and the unlimited. In the light of these considerations, it can be said that, in Arendt's philosophical project, the problem of the intimate disproportion of our temporal condition of mortal beings is posed not from the point of view of mortality, which for Arendt (2015) is the central category of metaphysical thought, but of the antinomy of mortal and immortality.

The Antinomy of Mortality and Immortality in Education

Based on the reading hypothesis proposed by Ricoeur (2016), we will seek to explain the temporal link between the activity of education and the antinomy of mortal and immortality. For us moderns, the concern with immortality is not something immediate, Arendt (2013) states. Even less immediate is linking this concern to the activity of education. The constant influx of newcomers into the world puts into play the permanence and stability of worldly things, which are manufactured with a view to erecting an abode for the ephemeral life of mortal beings. Although these things are made to last in time, their durability depends on how we relate to them. For Arendt (2013, p. 243), “[...] the world is created by mortal hands and serves as a home for mortals for a limited time.” If our common world is to transcend the brevity of our lives and endure across generations, we must take personal and collective responsibility for its immortality.

It is notably from this responsibility for the world that, according to Arendt (2013), we can deduce a concept of authority that is valid only for the sphere of education, even though it can never be applied to any other sphere of human existence. In this sense, according to Rodrigo Ribeiro Alves Neto (2019, p. 90), “authority is linked to responsibility for something that we want to endure and remain worthy of future remembrance”. The temporal bond that constitutes each and every educational relationship rests precisely on the tension between the change that arises from the constant arrival of new beings in the world and the permanence that the human world requires to shelter the newcomers.

In the realm of education, what is at stake is the potential immortality of the material and symbolic things that constitute our common world. We are always taking on the responsibility of educating the youngest in a world that is perishable and close to destruction, in a world whose continuity depends not only on the fact that new beings are born into the world - which, for Arendt (2013), is the essence of education - but also, and above all, on the specific way of relating to the works and monuments of the past that we judge worthy of remaining among us. Therefore, according to Arendt (2013), education demands direct judgments from us; it requires the exercise of our faculty of judgment to decide what is worthy of care and what we wish to shelter and protect from the ruins of time, because only in this way is it possible to transmit to the younger ones the legacy of our ancestors. Education is, according to Vanessa Sievers de Almeida (2018), an activity that potentially establishes an agonistic space of struggle against forgetting the past and of resistance against the mortality of the world. According to Almeida (2018, p. 276):

Educational activity is a privileged place to protect the world from oblivion, to name the events and knowledge of the past, to narrate the stories that make up the great book of history, and to present the dead to the living.

For the youngest children to be able to name the events and knowledge of the past and to inscribe themselves in a human and common languages, they must first become familiar with the world of strange things that we encounter from the very first moment of our birth. This, then, is the beginning of the educational process. As this world of strange things becomes familiar, newcomers gradually acquires a certain intimacy with that which we inherit from our ancestors without any will (Arendt, 2013). This process of becoming familiar with the world can be understood as a process in which the newcomers appropriate at a distance the things we hold in common. In other words, for the newcomers, the activity of education consists in making their own what was previously seen as something foreign and uninteresting.

It is in the close contact with mundane things, in direct contact with the world mediated by the works and monuments of the past that a new and developing being inscribes his individual life story in the great history book of mankind (Arendt, 2013; 2015). In this way, if we are inserted by birth as strange beings and, from a worldly point of view, we are seen as foreigners, education provides the youngest an opportune time for them to build their personal identities interwined with the world, so as to intertwine individual life stories with the plots and characters that make up the great history book. It is in this sense that, by presenting the world and telling to the youngsters the stories that we wish to shelter and protect from oblivion, education becomes a space of resistance against the mortality of the world (Almeida, 2018), because, by inserting them in a narrative plot in which they can continue the plot of this great storybook, education can stand up to the totalitarian temptation to produce sandstorms to cover up the past and thus desertify the world. "It is through narratives that the traces left by mortal beings in a world always close to destruction can become immortalized" (Batista, 2021b, p. 121).

The activity of education involves the exercise of the human capacity to wonder at mundane things, at the works of different cultural traditions, and to ask questions in order to become familiar with them. In a passage from the *Philosophical Diary*, written in 1969, Arendt (2005, p. 757) describes the inaugural gesture of the educational process and points to the movement of its realization:

When we are born into the world, we are first confronted exclusively with what appears, with what is sensitively perceptible. Since we are born into it as strangers, as foreigners if we are seen from the world, we are suddenly seized by wonder and our questions are set in the direction of becoming familiar with the world.

Insofar as everything that exists at the moment of our arrival in the world is always older than we are, the educational process is permeated from beginning to end by dialogue, friendly or otherwise, with those who have been here before us. It is up to youngest of us, then, not only to touch the surface of things in order to become familiar with them, but also to delve into the vast domains of the past and choose,

from among the living and the dead, in whose company the world gradually becomes less strange or more familiar. Although education is an activity that requires a specific mode of relationship with this world of things that is always older than we are and, at same time, an unceasing dialogue with our ancestors, educating is not an activity directed exclusively toward the past. Education is the sphere of human existence in which the past and the future are articulated. In this sense, according to Rodrigo Ribeiro Alves Neto (2019), insofar as it establishes and preserves the existence of a common world between the older and the younger, education allows us to become contemporaries both of those who came before us and of those whose task it is to renew our common world.

Education is the sphere of connection between the younger and the old. To educate oneself is to elaborate who we are and what comes to be in the cultural tradition to which we belong, for the past, in its historical course, not only delivers to us what we have been, but, above all, holds us responsible for what we have become (Neto, 2019, p. 91).

In this sense, we can say that education is the activity through which the younger, by placing themselves between the past and the future, answer the question that is asked of every newcomer: *who are you?* Or yet, the place from which it is possible to listen and meditate on the human voices resounding from the past, saying to every newcomer: *become who you are!* Either way, the educational process poses a question for the subject of education, a question that interrogates him about how to relate to our common world, about how to move in this space-between where the living and the dead cohabit. “The question is not about knowing or learning who I am, who you are, or who we are, the question is about caring for the self as being a care about what is in-between” (Masschelein; Simons, 2014, p. 166). What is at stake in the activity of education is, therefore, whether we love the world enough to protect and shelter the worldly things we deem worthy of continuing to exist among us (*inter-essere*). Thus, education interrogates younger people about what our common world has to say to them. And in face of this questioning, the younger people, as subjects of education, have the opportunity to respond to the world in what ways these voices from the past may or may not become alive in the present and resonate in the future for those who come after us.

For Arendt (2015, p. 68), “[...] the common world is that which we enter at birth and which we leave behind when we die”. However, this common world is not something ready and finished waiting for the youngest of us (Neto, 2019), nor something that is given to us immediately by those who welcomed us in the act of our birth. Becoming familiar with our common world is therefore the basic and fundamental condition for it to be possible to renew it. This is why it is necessary to welcome the past and communicate with the younger ones a world of material and symbolic things that have been transmitted to us by our ancestors. Only in this way, as a bet without guarantees, can we hope that our common world can withstand the vicissitudes of each new gen-

eration. Therefore, even though we are inserted into a common world by birth, the task of education is precisely that of communizing the world so that is possible to establish the common. According to Masschelein and Simons (2014, p. 165), “communization is first and perhaps only an educational, not a political, term. As education presents the world, again, unfinished, it transforms the world into a common thing [...]” With this gesture of communizing the legacy of our ancestors and potentially making it something that can remain unlimitedly in a world that serves as a dwelling place for mortal beings for a limited time, education expresses in a specific way its concern with immortality.

If for us, moderns, the concern with immortality is not something immediate, for the ancients, on the contrary, to the extent that mortality was the emblem of human existence, the concern with immortality translated into a concern with the greatness of their sayings and deeds in order to inscribe them in this kind of organized memory that was the *polis* (Arendt, 2015). In the self-understanding of the Greeks, according to Arendt (2015), the concern with immortality resulted from the experience of living in a cosmos where everything was immortal, except themselves! For the ancients, according to Arendt (2013), immortality was what nature and the gods possessed without effort and without anyone’s assistance, whereas for mortals one had to always be the best in order to try to achieve immortality and survive the world into which they were born and admitted for a short interval of time.

The mortality of men lies in the fact that individual, with an identifiable history from birth to death, steams from biological life. This individual life differs from all other things by the rectilinear course of its motion, which so to speak, pierces the circular motion of biological life. This is what mortality is: moving along a straight line in a universe in which everything that moves does so in cyclical direction (Arendt, 2015, p. 24).

The antinomy of the mortal and the immortality in the realm of education could then be put in the following terms: if our individual life is characterized by the rectilinear course of its movement that pierces from side to side the circularity of biological life and thus allows something absolutely new into the world to come to light, the task of education consists in bending back this rectilinear movement so that the youngers can inscribe themselves in the vast domains of the past and circumscribe the objects, material and symbolic, of different cultural traditions that they deem worthy of care. Without this careful attitude toward those objects that may disappear from our common and human world, which is also characterized by the mortality of its inhabitants, everything that exists to last in time would evanescent so quickly that it would not even last long enough to be transmitted to our immediate successors. If the worldly things we wish to pass on the younger ones always run the risk of disappearing, because they are made by mortal beings and come into existence under the sign of mortality, education is the point at which we decide whether or not to assume our responsibility for the world. In this sense, according to Almeida (2018, p 275-276):

In education we decide whether to leave the world to die or to care for its potential immortality. Making sure that the experiences of the past do not die and that our ancestors have not lived in vain is what we aim for when we introduce the new to a world of the living and the dead.

In the Arendtian philosophical project, *amor mundi* is said in many ways. In education, we could say that caring for the world translates into caring for its potential immortality. Caring for the world consists in creating bonds of belonging with men and women who have gone before us. In this sense, for José Sérgio de Carvalho (2019), the activity of education constitutes a mode of *amor mundi*, that is, it constitutes a form of caring for the world. Educating the younger is, according to Carvalho (2019, p. 267), the expression of “[...] a way in which men strive to imprint durability on the works, languages, forms of understanding, political principles, and memorable events to which they attribute value and meaning”.

For the youngest of us, becoming familiar with the world means making society with the works and monuments of the past that constitute our common world. The task of education is to create the conditions in which the younger can weave links and establish alliances with those who came before we even arrived in the world. And in order for them to make society with the memorable works, sayings, and deeds of the past, time must be given to the enjoyment of the world, to linger patiently and attentively with the objects of culture; we must go out, visit and frequent the illustrious men and women who, even in dark of Alain (1978), in the act of reading Homer’s poems, for example, we and the younger ones can make bonds not only with the poet, but also with the characters and all those people who know his work or have only heard his name.

When I read Homer, I make society with the poet, society with Ulysses and with Achilles, society also with the multitude of those who read these poems, and also with the multitude of those who only heard the poet’s name. In all of them, and in me, I make the human sound, I hear the steps of man (Alain, 1978, p. 172).

Making society with poets, scientists, artists, philosophers, activists, etc. is a way to take care of our common world, a way to make possible the experience of the immortal and, in dialogue with the living and the dead, to be contemporaries of those who bequeathed us the world as it is and as it could be. At this point, we rediscover Ricoeur’s (2016) interpretation from the very realm of education. If, for Ricoeur (2016, p. 27), “[...] politics [in the Arendtian philosophical project] marks the supreme effort to immortalize the world so that newcomers can insert themselves into it on their own initiative and reveal who they are through deeds and words. For the elder, for those who take responsibility for the world and fulfill the task of introducing it to the newcomers, education also marks the supreme effort of sheltering and protecting a world of things that, were it not for the arrival of the newcomers, would be doomed to disappear with our death. As a specific response to a spe-

cific question posed by our temporal condition as mortal beings, education is the activity that doubly express our *amor mundi*, that is, our love for the world of things interposed among us and, at same time, our love for the younger ones whose task is to renew our common world.

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable. And Education too is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world (Arendt, 1961, p. 196).

Therefore, as the youngers seek to become familiar with the world by visiting and making society with the works and monuments of the past, it is necessary that the elders declare and manifest, in educational relationships, their love for the newness that comes into the world with each birth, and not only for the objects of culture that with each generation risk disappearing from the world. As educators, we have the dual responsibility of protecting and sheltering both the works of the past we deem worthy of remaining among us, and the newness that comes into the world with the arrival of each new human being.

The antinomy of mortal and immortality in the realm of education asks us about the possibility of preserving a world made by mortal beings against the mortality of its inhabitants; about the possibility of sheltering the constant influx of mortal beings and, with this gesture, preserve the potential immortality of the world. A philosophical anthropology for education opens us to possibility of (re)thinking, in an ethical and political horizon, our relationship with the world and with the young; the possibility of being contemporaries of the living and the dead and deciding in the company of whom we wish to fight against the mortality of worldly things that can confer some confidence and stability to the dwelling of mortal beings on earth.

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Notes

- 1 This article is a new reading of Paul Ricouer's (2016) interpretation about the arendtian philosophical project that I develop on the first chapter of my PHD thesis (Batista, 2021a).
- 2 For Arendt (2012), a fictional world, a world that is organized based on a single point of view, can only emerge when the common world has been completely destroyed. "The common world ends when it is seen only from one aspect and is only allowed to present itself in a single perspective" (Arendt, 2015, p. 71). Totalitarian regimes are fictitious worlds insofar as they were ideologically structured to verify their premises, which could never resist the human con-

dition of plurality. The destruction of the space in which human beings could gather and share the world was one of the conditions of possibility for the existence of a fictional world. More precisely, according to Arendt's analysis of the totalitarian phenomenon, what guarantees the existence of a fictitious world is not simply the fact that it is structured by an ideology in which everything is possible, but that the logic of this idea can be verified in laboratories. scientifically controlled, the concentration and extermination camps, where the validity of its fundamental premises could be confirmed. And, for that, according to Arendt (2012), totalitarian regimes resorted not only to the use of force and violence, as occurs in any tyranny or dictatorship, but to terror. For Arendt (2012), terror is the essence of totalitarianism. "In place of borders and channels of communication between individual men, [terror] builds an iron belt that encircles them in such a way that it is as if the plurality dissolved into One-Only-Man of gigantic dimensions" (Arendt, 2012, p. 619).

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