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ARTICLE

POST DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: I present in this article a study about the educational possibilities in a “post-democratic” context. The “post-democracy” reverberates in Brazil through the absence of limits of powers (economical, political), which flexes, commercializes and destroys rights, wherein the violence perverts the public space dehumanizing and turning invisible the unwelcome people of the neoliberal project. Research in education cannot neglect the relevance of investigating the context in which it occurs, while, at the same time, proposing alternatives that ensure its specificity. In that sense, departing from the interpretation of fundamental authors, I have established relations based in the plausibility and coherence of arguments to help formulate answers to the central problem. The education, to stand against the “post-democracy”, takes a privileged place in the school, wherein the students must have access to the truth and knowledge (in contrast to the “post-truth”), the respect of limits (the truth, the knowledge, the world and the others are limits to the childish narcissism and perversions), the imposition of limits (the school becomes a limit to the injunctions from the family, the economy, the society and the politics), the introduction into the “world” and the learning of democratic values.

Keywords: Post-democracy, education, limits.

PÓS-DEMOCRACIA E EDUCAÇÃO

RESUMO: Apresento no artigo um estudo sobre as possibilidades educacionais num contexto “pós-democrático”. A “Pós-Democracia” repercute no Brasil pela ausência de limites aos poderes (econômico, político) que flexibiliza, mercantiliza e destrói direitos, no qual a violência perverte o espaço público invisibilizando e desumanizando os indesejáveis ao projeto neoliberal. Uma pesquisa em educação não pode negligenciar a relevância de investigar sobre o contexto em que ela acontece, ao mesmo tempo em que propõe alternativas que garantam sua especificidade. Nesse sentido, a partir da interpretação de autores fundamentais, estabeleci relações com base na plausibilidade e coerência dos argumentos em auxiliar-me na construção de respostas ao problema central. A educação, para fazer frente à “Pós-Democracia”, acontece privilegiadamente na escola, na qual os estudantes devem ter acesso à verdade e ao conhecimento (em contraposição à “Pós-verdade”), ao respeito aos limites (a verdade, o conhecimento, o mundo e os outros são limites ao narcisismo infantil e às perversões), à imposição de limites (a escola se torna um limite às injunções da família, da economia, da sociedade e da política), à introdução no “mundo” e ao aprendizado de valores democráticos.

Palavras-chave: Pós-Democracia, educação, limites.

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POSTDEMOCRACIA Y EDUCACIÓN

RESÚMEN: Presento en el artículo un estudio sobre posibilidades educativas en un contexto "posdemocrático". La "postdemocracia" tiene repercusiones en Brasil debido a la ausencia de límites a los poderes (económicos, políticos) que relajan, mercantilizan y destruyen los derechos, en los cuales la violencia pervierte el espacio público al hacer invisibles y deshumanizar a aquellos indeseables para el proyecto neoliberal. La investigación en educación no puede descuidar la relevancia de investigar el contexto en el que tiene lugar, al proponer alternativas que garanticen su especificidad. En este sentido, basado en la interpretación de autores fundamentales, establecí relaciones basadas en la plausibilidad y coherencia de los argumentos para ayudarme en la construcción de respuestas al problema central. La educación, para enfrentar la "Postdemocracia", se realiza de forma privada en la escuela, en la que los estudiantes deben tener acceso a la verdad y al conocimiento (en oposición a la "Post-verdad"), con respecto a los límites (la verdad, el conocimiento, el mundo y otros son límites para el narcisismo y las perversiones infantiles) la imposición de límites (la escuela se convierte en un límite para los mandatos de la familia, la economía, la sociedad y la política), la introducción al "mundo" y aprender valores democráticos.

Palabras clave: Postdemocracia, educación, límites.

INTRODUCTION

Because yes. Because that's what we are doing. Because that's what we believe. Because that's what we said we were going to do. Because that's what the people said they wanted. Because I have come to save everyone. Because I did. That, ultimately, was the only answer: because yes (MCEWAN, 2020, p.84).

It is the moments of "crisis" that demand from science, academia, and politicians, forceful answers, not founded on prejudice and/or pre-judgments, but on reflections and ponderings about the facts. Truth, knowledge, and thought are mobilized to present an answer to the crisis, especially because it "tears apart facades and obliterates prejudices", allowing us to explore the essence of all that has been "laid bare" (ARENDT, 2007, p. 223) that the crisis we live in requires us to think about what politics, democracy, and what the meaning of education is in a world doomed to ruin.

Democracy is not simply "power of the people" or "sovereignty of the people". Perhaps we need to break away from these simplistic definitions that cover anti-democratic traps. First, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of "people" and, second, to understand that the idea of sovereignty is anti-political and thus anti-democratic, even if it is the sovereignty of "the people." Following a "traditional" definition of democracy, it means a "form of government in which the interests of the people as a whole are attended to publicly, the same people forming part in the decision-making process" (MONEDERO, 2012, p.74). As a "form of government," democracy is not about the practices and actions of citizens, but about the institutions and the guarantees of their functioning. To say that we live in a democracy because the "institutions are working"² is a half-truth. The "democratic institutions", united by the concept of the state, have been serving private interests and the "neoliberal rationality", which neutralizes the political and, consequently, democracy. The "neutralization of the political" refers to the "colonization of the conflict inherent in the political by the supposed neutrality of technology, with the consequent displacement of the struggle toward the economic arena, defined as competition" (MONEDERO, 2012, p. 77).³

Researching and writing about education requires an understanding of events and phenomena, because without an understanding of the "world" we have come to live in, educational problems cannot be addressed (TAPIAS, 1996, p. 19). This is not to say that education will solve the problems of the world or build a better society. It is not the task of education to change the world, but of adults who are able and, in principle, educated. Therefore, "anyone who refuses to take collective responsibility for the world should not have children, and must be forbidden to take part in their education" (ARENDT, 2007, p. 239). Education cannot be political in the sense of being an instrument for politics, but it must be political because of its task of introducing the new to the "world" and thus making its continuity possible. That is why we need to investigate what is the meaning of education in the context of post-democracy, if the defense of a non-instrumental education, of the school with a specificity that locates it "inside the walls" - outside the turbulences of our times - is enough to not form individuals adapted to post-democracy and if it is possible to educationally resist the "lawless society".

The "comparisons" and distinctions between Bolsonaro and Hitler (presented for the sole purpose of clarifying arguments and providing examples), leaders who came to power with popular and business support, are limited to the period before taking office in their respective positions (President of the Republic and Reich Chancellor). I do not intend to compare biographies, because the success of both

² Since the ousting of President Dilma Rousseff, members of the three branches of the Republic have claimed that democratic institutions work in Brazil. In 2016, the political apex of the "Lava Jato" operation, the then judge Sérgio Moro used the jargon (<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2016/04/1759192-nao-acerto-todas-na-lava-jato-diz-juiz-sergio-moro.shtml>). On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the 1988 Constitution, then Supreme Court Chief Justice Carmen Lúcia said that democratic institutions work in Brazil (<https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2018/08/23/carmen-lucia-diz-que-instituicoes-democraticas-funcionam-no-brasil-mas-com-deficiencias.ghtml>). In 2019, former President Fernando Henrique Cardoso criticized the Bolsonaro government, but stressed that institutions are working (<https://oglobo.globo.com/busca/click?q=institui%C3%A7%C3%B5es+democr%C3%A1ticas+est%C3%A3o+funcionando&p=4&r=1585612595089&u=https%3A%2F%2Fblogs.oglobo.globo.com%2Fbernardo-mello-franco%2Fpost%2Ffernando-henrique-brasil-esta-vivendo-o-signo-do-odio.html&t=informational&d=false&f=false&ss=&o=&cat=&key=5aec2f71d57317242603dce3b93ff8e1>).

³ All translations are my own.

politicians did not happen exclusively because of factors related to the persona, but to the context, the ideas disseminated among people, the role of ideology, and the representation, as typification, of these characters for the study about the absence of limits to the powers, that is, how some of their practices revealed tendencies, especially, of the "loss of the world". I use the use of some "characters" to show that it is the men and women who contribute with their acts, words, and deeds to the "story" and that this is not a depersonalized narrative, as if it existed independently of the actors. They are individuals with their "lives," interests, desires, worldviews, and ideologies that help us understand what happened and what we human beings are capable of.

It is possible to say that we live in "dark times" when the public realm obscures "and the world has become so uncertain that people have stopped asking politics for more than due regard for their vital interests and personal freedom" (ARENDT, 1991, p. 21). When this happens, the world can be destroyed and its absence is a form of barbarism (ARENDT, 1991, p. 23). If in "dark times" it is possible to expect a light to come from some men and women who become examples (ARENDT, 1991, p. 10), perhaps Bolsonaro and Hitler are the darkness that contributes to the "dark times".

THE "POST DEMOCRATIC" CONTEXT IN BRAZIL

I am the Constitution (BOLSONARO, 2020).⁴

Politics is the space of the relationship between equal and free individuals as citizens, and also the *locus* of conflicts and not of consensus, that is, consensus cannot be the end of democracy, as it would annul debates and discussions, political action, in favor of more effective means of consensus. Democracy is the space of conflict, neither as an end nor as a means. Democracy is conflict and consensus, and politics is the mundane space in which men gather in the mode of discourse and action (ARENDT, 2005). Without action, therefore, without the possibility of dissent, given that we are singular beings, there is no politics and, therefore, no democracy. But there can be the "institutional democracy" or, as I prefer, the "post-democracy", which is, also, the "post-politics". It is not "authoritarianism" to the extent that it continues to call itself "democracy", despite the losses of democracy, and because there is a tendency toward boundlessness, close to that of totalitarianism, with comparable characters and dissolution of the basic distinctions (public/private, politics/economy) that began with Modernity but which now present new developments. Such elements make it possible to state that, ontologically, a "post" does not need a "before", although it is necessary logically. It is "post-democracy" because we still need a word to account for a new phenomenon⁵, even though it is made up of elements belonging to the West itself.

For Hannah Arendt (2005, p. 205), German philosopher, "human plurality, the basic condition of both speech and action, has the double meaning of equality and distinction", that is, if men were not equal, they could not understand each other, and if they were not distinct, they would not need speech and action. Politics, which takes place in public space, is only possible when equality and distinction are possible, that is, when men act together in a space of equality and freedom. Arendt's proposition does not eliminate consensus, since equality among men makes this possible, but a consensus that does not eliminate the possibility of dissent. In a formal democracy, of institutions and suffrage, it is fundamental that there is the possibility of dissensus, represented by the defense of human dignity, by the respect for human rights, and by the existence of limits to the exercise of power (political and economic) and to the arbitrariness that, in the Brazilian case, refer to the Fundamental Rights and Guarantees: the articles that make up Title II of the *Federal Constitution*. The absence of limits on power makes any democratic claim unfeasible.

⁴ "I am the Constitution" says Bolsonaro, one day after pro-Dictatorship act" (<https://cbn.globoradio.globo.com/media/audio/298783/eu-sou-constituicao-diz-bolsonaro-um-dia-apos-ato-.htm>).

⁵ "<<post>> [...] is indicative of our location at a stage in relation to which there is an awareness of transition: the awareness of finding oneself at a cultural crossroads at which the old is no longer worthwhile and one walks in search of the new" (TAPIAS, 1996, p. 20).

It was intended, by conferring strict limits on power, including the power of majorities of occasion (majorities sometimes forged in the misinformation produced by the mass media), to overcome the impoverished and merely formal conception of democracy that is identified with submission to the majority principle for decision making (CASARA, 2018b, p. 12).

The majority rule can be an element of effectiveness for political decisions in plural societies, but there are counter-majoritarian mechanisms to prevent the majority from destroying or tyrannizing the minority, enabling dissent and political action. For if all were equal, including in their "interests" and "opinions", there would be no reason for the existence of politics as a sphere of action. Majorities, moreover, can represent consensus, although they are not allowed to eliminate action and public space, the place of the appearance of oneness, where consensus must be the result of debates and action, not of violence, propaganda, and intimidation. "Only man can express this distinction and distinguish himself, and only he can communicate his own self and not simply something: thirst or hunger, affection, hostility or fear" (ARENDT, 2005, p. 206).

Hence the fear of majorities and the defense of limits to powers. Thirst, hunger, affections, fear, anger, hatred, are attributes of the species, not of individuals or singularities. They evidence "what" men have or are: thirsty, hungry, fearful, angry, hateful, but not "who they are." "Who are you?" According to Arendt (2005, p. 208), "this discovery of who someone is implicit in both their words and their actions," and the revelation takes place in a space of equality and freedom, the public space that ensures the reality of the world and of ourselves, insofar as appearance constitutes reality (ARENDT, 2005, p. 71). "Public," for Arendt, therefore, means the sphere of appearance, and also the world itself, "while it is common to us all and differentiated from our privately possessed place in it" (ARENDT, 2005, p. 71-73).

The indistinction between "public" and "private" reaches its apex in Totalitarianism, in a "total politicization" of existence. Hitler, for example, had no private life. Or rather, his private life was a void. Besides the frustrations arising from constant failures, after rising as the leader of a movement, he lived exclusively for the role he played:

There was no retreat to a sphere outside the political, to a deeper existence that would condition his public reflections. It is not that his 'private life' became part of his public persona [...]. In fact, Hitler 'privatized' the public sphere. 'Private' and 'public' merged completely and became inseparable. Hitler's entire being became subordinated to the role he played to perfection: that of 'Führer' (KERSHAW, 2010, p. 29-30).

In Brazil, Bolsonaro has not subordinated himself to the role of president and made it his own. On the contrary, the Presidency of the Republic (institution) has become Bolsonaro, who manages political affairs as private: the palace intrigues, the reforms in the Palácio do Planalto, the responses on social networks to his disaffected represent not the posture of an individual who assumes political responsibility as a ruler, but a private entity with his interests that makes the post his own and manages the public as family.

The "private" means being deprived of things essential to human life: "being deprived of the reality that comes from being seen and heard by others, being deprived of an <<objective>> relation to others that comes from being related to and separated from them through the common world" (ARENDT, 2005, p. 78). One cannot know whether the president is deprived of reality by using lying as a policy or by alienation, since difference is always a problem, something that causes him anxiety. In any case, this alienation does not allow him to have access to reality, which is constituted to the extent that human beings exchange their perceptions with each other and correct them. On the other hand, even if he privatizes the Presidency of the Republic, Bolsonaro does not live a private life in the sense that it offers a protection from the world, a place where, separated from the world and from others, it is possible to think, to reflect on everything that happens and on one's own thoughts. "A life that takes place in public, in the presence of others, becomes superficial" (ARENDT, 2005, p. 86), because it separates itself from the depth that only thought can attain. Thought tries to go to the root of the issues, searches for the meaning of what happens or of the thoughts themselves, but in relation to evil, it faces superficiality and gets frustrated because it only finds banality (BERNSTEIN, 2006, p. 237).

On this theme, the "banality of evil" and the relationship with thought (can thinking be an antidote to the banality of evil?), Arendt wrote her last major work, *The Life of the Spirit*. The impetus for the study was the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, published in book form later. For the author, "the acts were monstrous, but the agent-at least the one on trial-was quite ordinary, banal, and not demonic or monstrous" (2009, p. 18). This was verified by the inability to think, absence of ideological convictions or evil motivations. It was about thoughtlessness, not stupidity (ARENDT, 2009, p. 18). The incapacity to think, in turn, revealed itself in the use of clichés, set phrases, adherence to codes of conduct that have the function of "protecting us from reality, that is, from the demand of attention of thought made by all facts and events by virtue of their mere existence (ARENDT, 2009, p. 19)⁶. The absence of thinking, of facing facts and crises not with prejudices and pre-judgments, as I argued earlier, also characterized Hitler, an individual with few intellectual and social attributes, incapable of genuine friendship, although a frequent reader. But, "reading for him was not a search for enlightenment or learning, but for confirmation of prejudices" (KERSHAW, 2010, p. 84), i.e., he was incapable of conducting any experiment, including thought experiments, of reflecting and putting himself in the place of others.

It should be noted that neither Hitler nor Bolsonaro would have political success under other conditions. If Hitler was an effective orator, the same cannot be said of the Brazilian president. Both were successful, keeping the circumstantial distinctions in mind, not by creating any idea, doctrine or belief, but by combining simple diagnoses and recipes for complex problems, playing on the hatred and resentment spread in society. "What Hitler was doing was propagating non-original ideas in an original way. He gave voice to phobias, prejudices, and resentments like no one else [...]. What counted was not what he said, but *how* he said it" (KERSHAW, 2010, p. 113-114, emphasis added). In relation to the Brazilian, the originality did not occur by some attribute of his, but by a different way of spreading ideas: the "memes" and a network of fake news on the Internet.

The "discourse" of Bolsonaro and his supporters is based on our tradition of hate and violence that resonates in the simplifications of "solutions" to complex problems. To the increase in violence, the arming of the population and a package of laws called "Anticrime"; to the increase in the unemployment rate and the State's revenue crisis, a labor reform and a social security reform; the (supposed) inability of the State to finance public works, health and education is answered by blaming the Workers' Party. In these few examples I interpret that there is evidence of a preponderance of state violence and violence as language expressed in the speeches of representatives and in the actions of the government, especially by the emphasis of the Criminal Justice System in detriment of other segments of Justice and/or other ways of understanding "Justice".

This is one of the important elements of the "post-democracy", in which there is the loosening of the limits to powers and arbitrariness and the concomitant use of Justice for the "management of undesirables". For Casara (2018a), the public space, language, and actions of the State (and citizens!) no longer value freedom, but imprisonment in a evaluating conflict. "The Criminal Justice System is the main laboratory for testing the social acceptance of authoritarian measures" (CASARA, 2018a, p. 92), and the ideal of "Justice" is replaced by that of "Power" or, to use Hannah Arendt's concepts, of violence and submission. What specifies the Criminal Justice System in the "Post-Democracy" "is not authoritarianism or even selective use of penal power, but rather the absence of limits on the exercise of that power," argues Casara (2018a, p. 95).

In 2019, the then Minister of Justice, Sergio Moro, presented a draft bill called "Anticrime" to the House of Representatives. Among some measures, two deserve appreciation: a) on custodial sentences, which authorizes imprisonment in second instance, amending the Criminal Enforcement Law in Art. 105; b) the expansion of the understanding of "legitimate defense" of State agents, with the possibility of suspension of sentence for "excesses" originating from "excrable fear, surprise or violent emotion", amending Article 23 of the Penal Code. Such changes can be interpreted in the "post-Democratic" perspective of the absence of limits to powers and arbitrariness, in this case, of the State in

⁶ A more detailed study would be needed with the individuals cited in footnote 2, about the functioning of democratic institutions. The hypothesis that seems plausible to me is a combination of absence of thought (which does not mean ignorance) and political opportunism, within a project consistent with "neoliberal rationality," in which democracy is attacked or emptied of its political meaning.

the name of "neoliberal rationality". As far as measure "a" is concerned, it is about valuing the arrest, the detention, and not the freedom of the defendant. In other words, it attacks the Fundamental Rights and Guarantees under the ideology of the effectiveness of incarceration as a way to solve and contain social problems. Article 5 of the Constitution foreshadows the defense of individual freedom, which in subsection LVII, "no one shall be considered guilty until a sentence has been passed in a court of law" guarantees citizens the presumption of innocence and, therefore, the non-anticipation of punishment or guilt. "In post-democracy, the notion of the duty of the state agent to guarantee fundamental rights disappears" (CASARA, 2018a, p. 111). Prison, in the democratic rule of law, is the exception, and freedom is the rule. In the "post-democracy", prison is the rule, and freedom the exception. And, regarding the presumption of innocence, the judge must start from the assumption that the citizen is innocent and only contrary evidence results in conviction (CASARA, 2018a, p. 154). Some of Sergio Moro's judgments when he served as a federal judge, especially in the context of the *Lava Jato* operation, represented an inflection in this principle.

As the agents of the State do not begin their actions by defending the Fundamental Rights and Guarantees, it is logical, for the draft of the Ministry of Justice, to protect not the citizen and his rights but the agent of the Penal State, according to the change in item "b". The Judiciary (considering former Minister Sérgio Moro's background as a Federal Judge), and the State in general, is not guided by the idea of "duty", but "power" (or violence), to consolidate itself and meet the desires of a majority, produced by the spectacle. "The performance of the magistrates becomes that of the businessman guided by the desire of the majorities, and with this, the space and the rights of those who do not meet the neoliberal logic are made unviable" (CASARA, 2018a, p.132). There is a rupture with the limits to the exercise of power and with the counter-majoritarian nature of the Judiciary.

The definition of "post-democracy" as the absence of boundaries is thought by Casara (2018a and 2018b) referring to Jean-Pierre Lebrun's studies in *A world without boundaries* (2004). For the French author, there has been an "evolution" in the meaning of the "family," in relation to the "roles," expectations, and performance of the individuals who compose it. The "family" represents the "cauldron of social life", the place where the future subject is prepared, in short, a space of formation. Evolution "generates a crisis in which the "father" declines, that is, the "third position" and authority. The "family" is no longer governed as an institution, but by a private pact, in which tensions are resolved by internal negotiations under the organizational idea of an "egalitarian family. With biological science, the genitor is confused with the father in the order of sonship. What in principle is a gain, the expansion of equality, brings profound damage to the formation of subjects (LEBRUN, 2004, p. 14). Moreover, Arendt considers that equality is an exclusive attribute of politics, not of the social or private sphere of the family.

The function of the "father", whose decadence is related to the absence of limits, is based on the symbolic and not on the biological. For Lebrun (2004, p. 27, emphasis added), the father

is the first *stranger*, who is and always will be the stranger in the most familiar, and this beyond any affinities and companionship that may exist between father and child. It is this irreducible otherness that defines him and from which he will never entirely depart; he is and will remain a radical other.

The "father" is someone else who breaks with the "other himself" of the mother, establishing language, the symbolic, in short, the limit. The child needs to separate from the mother to become a subject, that is, to impose its own desire over the mother's desire. Evidently, the child begins the individuation process with the mother, as long as the relationship is healthy. But it is the "father," the "radical other," who institutes otherness (LEBRUN, 2004, p. 27) insofar as he interdicts the dominance of the mother and of "sameness," of the identification of desire with the mother's desire or desire for the mother. "We can perfectly well understand 'the father' as the one who comes to say 'no, she is not everything you say of her!'" (LEBRUN, 2004, p. 32), setting a boundary, presenting himself as another and allowing the child to be desiring and himself. The mother offers a first signifier of the "other" and of what the child is, and the "father" relativizes them, introducing the asymmetrical register of the third (LEBRUN, 2004, p. 35). The mother already has "ownership" and there is no hope of extracting

jouissance from it. But it is necessary that the mother holds the father's place, authorizes the intervention so that the "real father" intervenes, ratified, also, by the social (LEBRUN, 2004, p. 42).

Thus, the "father" signifier imposes limits to freedom and oppression (of the child and the mother), because there is another who is desirable and free and is not inscribed in the maternal representations. The father "interdicts the child's drive, while making the mother realize that the child is not a part of her" (CASARA, 2018b, p. 51). The origins of "post-democracy" as well as the possibility of the "antidotes" can be sought in training and education, in the process of subjectivation and in the conditions of possibility for singularity. If "post-democracy" is only possible in a "society without limits", from the absence of limits to the arbitrary and to power, there is a relationship between "neoliberalism" and "totalitarianism", because the totalitarian system is constituted in the mass that desires the leader's desire, which states "society is me" (LEBRUN, 2004, p. 85). The leader relies on the mass while organizing the classless society, in which everything is politics, that is, the party penetrates every domain of existence and the abolition of the paternal metaphor, making the otherness of the father disappear. This is the abuse of maternal power. For Lebrun (2004, p. 90), "the figure of Hitler should rather be related to the omnipotent mother than to what is commonly called the tyrannical father."

Hitler was "mother" in that all references and desires were his, desires desired by the masses. The Nazis were busy not only destroying reality, but creating the conditions for the ideology to become real, acting as if there was indeed a Jewish world plot or, in certain circles more sensitive to anti-Semitic attacks, Hitler was reducing Germany's problems to "Marxism," "a convenient simplification to detract from Weimar democracy" (KERSHAW, 2010, p. 211). "The people who began to flock to Hitler's speeches in 1919 and 1920 were not driven by refined theories. For them, what worked were simple slogans that lit the fires of anger, resentment, and hatred" (KERSHAW, 2010, p. 115). What else can ignite anger, resentment, and hatred than the "terrible other"? The uncontrolled, unadapted, unassimilated, the desiring other? Hate, in particular, is directed at the symbolic rather than the "real," at the hole that is located in the narcissistic consciousness: "the existence of the other generates a threat to the image that the hater has of himself" (CASARA, 2018b, p. 33). How to explain the hatred of the poor, of black people, of native peoples, of gays, of women, of communists? The totalitarian system needs to destroy otherness, placing it in the position of an "absolute evil" that must be extirpated, destroyed, exterminated. Thus, hatred is linked to lying and hallucinosis, that is, "an effective distortion of the *capacity to think* founded on the need to *saturate* reality with desires that cannot withstand frustration, as well as on the corrosive impact of the psychic mechanisms linked to hatred on thought itself" (AB'SÁBER, 2018, p. 129, emphasis added).

Arendt (2012, p. 435), in turn, argues that for the Nazis evil exerted a morbid attraction, independent of personal interest, and the movement demanded and sustained itself in an altruism of the adherents, that is, a total conformism and the willingness to appear to be necessary. What moves the masses is not conviction or idealism, but dissatisfaction, despair, disbelief in party hopes, and, as far as the "mass man" is concerned, the "understanding" of having failed as an individual and being suffering an injustice, self-centered bitterness, loss of interest in oneself, indifference, a general disregard for the rules of common sense, self-abandonment, and loneliness. For Arendt (2012, p. 446), "the chief characteristic of mass man is neither brutality nor rudeness, but his isolation and his lack of normal relationships." The Nazi Party (NSPDA) was not a representation of class, but of the nation (KERSHAW, 2010, p. 234). In Brazil, in the last election campaigns (2014, 2016, and 2018) it was frequent for candidates to present themselves "neither as right-wing nor as left-wing" when they represented conservative or extreme right-wing interests. In the last election, there was a "turn" in the discourse. It was no longer a matter of "neither left nor right", but of representing a fanciful abstraction: "Brazil above all, God above all".

In Brazil, there was support from the population for the approval of PEC 241, the spending cap, and even a significant portion of the current president's voters defend austerity measures, cutting social spending that directly affect health, education, and employment, or even adhere to clichés about the "communist threat" or "Bolivarianism". We all know people who voted for and support (or supported) a government that acts contrary to their immediate interests. This may be a reaction to social policies of inclusion of the poorest in the economy, especially by the "neoliberal rationality" that considers men as selfish rational beings, willing to "parasitize" the State and not to act economically and

productively, not to seek to undertake without the coercions of the State and the needs of competition. From this derives the criticism of the expansion of popular participation in political decisions, taxed as Bolivarianism by the Brazilian right, according to an elitist view of democracy: "what is being said is that the preservation of the rule of law, order and stability requires citizens to behave as spectators while representatives govern" (FRATESCHI, 2018, p. 156-157). On the other hand, it can also be alienation according to what I wrote above, subjects who have dispensed with the ability to think about what happens to them or what they do, are indifferent to what is happening to themselves and others, not composing a class or participating in "traditional" political parties, which are limited by determined and attainable goals (ARENDT, 2012, p. 442). The masses are outside normal political representation and "constitute the majority of neutral and politically indifferent people, who never join a party and rarely exercise the power to vote" (ARENDT, 2012, p. 439).

In the 2018 presidential elections, according to data from the Superior Electoral Court, in the first round, there were 20.33% of abstentions, 2.65% of white votes, and 6.14% of null votes, totaling 29.12% of voters. In the second round, there was little change: 21.30% of abstentions, 2.14% of white votes, and 7.43% of null votes, totaling 30.87%. Can it be said that the voters that make up this group belong to a mass? Yes, if they are indifferent, uninterested in themselves and in the "public", hopeless and distrustful of "professional politicians" and political parties, and not articulated with a common interest that would bind them together in a grouping. Perhaps this group could be explained from the logic that elections don't change their private lives nor represent possible or expected signs of success, and that regardless of the political grouping in turn, things will always be the same. In the Brazilian electoral system, they would make a difference if they participated in the election; therefore, non-attendance is not exempt from responsibility. On the other hand, despite a potential discontentment, it is reasonable to think that candidate Bolsonaro would gather the votes of the discontented and disbelievers with "traditional" politics and the big parties, giving voice to resentment, hatred and frustrations by using violence and force as language⁷, as anti-discourse and, therefore, as anti-politics, because he denies the other as alterity or, in Arendtian terms, singularity. For Arendt (1993), the meaning of politics is freedom, that is, the possibility to act, to initiate, to start, to break with expectations and history and establish the new. Thus, politics is the space of the "miracle", and a politics considered only as the resolution of needs liquidates politics itself and becomes meaningless (ARENDT, 1993, p. 119). Action, then, takes place especially in the "space-between," in politics, and concerns the "world."

Bolsonaro and his speeches evidenced not a "politics of necessity", that is, of projects to meet vital demands, but of destruction, of rupture, of opposition to "all that is there", even if it was a decoy, since he was part, as a federal deputy for the state of Rio de Janeiro, of all that was there. The most important thing was not what he said, but how he said it and the effect it had. The combination of a masculine fantasy⁸ with the cult of violence, the choice of the enemy according to the moment and convenience (the Workers' Party, Communism, Venezuela, China, the left), the repetition of a Manichean and, therefore, simplistic conception of reality were (and still are) components of his performance, which contributes to the understanding of what I call "post-Democratic", because it destroys the action, the discourse and the possibility of appearing as singular. Hence the need to constantly interpret a role, project a scenario. Like Hitler, Bolsonaro is an agitator, an anti-democrat, an extoller of violence and force. Distinct from the German, he is incapable of organizing the masses, a bad orator, and focused

⁷ In Acre, during an electoral campaign in 2018, Bolsonaro said: "let's shoot the petralhada (people who vote for the left-wing political party PT) here in Acre, huh?", while using a camera tripod to simulate a machine gun (<https://exame.abril.com.br/brasil/vamos-fuzilar-a-petralhada-diz-bolsonaro-em-campanha-no-acre/>). In 2003, Bolsonaro told Congresswoman Maria do Rosário (PT/RS) that he would not rape her because she did not deserve it, an episode repeated in 2014 (<https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/stf-mantem-pagamento-de-indenizacao-de-bolsonaro-maria-do-rosario-23464003>). Or the "tribute" to the torturer Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, on the occasion of the trial of the Impeachment process in the Chamber of Deputies in 2016. and claimed in 2019 that Ustra is a national hero (<https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/bolsonaro-afirma-que-torturador-brilhante-ustra-e-um-heroi-nacional/>).

⁸ "For Hitler, women were an object, an adornment in a 'male world'" (KERSHAW, 2010, p.250) and the masses were treated as feminine (KERSHAW, 2010, p.253). In Bolsonaro's government, the ministry is composed mostly of white, heterosexual men. About his daughter, he said in a lecture at the Hebrew: "I have five children. There were four men, and the fifth one I gave in and a woman came along" (<https://revistaforum.com.br/noticias/bolsonaro-eu-tenho-5-filhos-foram-4-homens-a-quinta-eu-dei-uma-fraquejada-e-veio-uma-mulher-3/>).

solely on the worship of himself as a "myth". Hitler had the support of a party that contributed to the cult of his personality. Bolsonaro won the election in the PSL (Social Liberal Party), which had 241,152 members in October 2018, with a government program of few ideas and proposals, but with a neoliberal logic. This could contribute to increase mobilization, encompassing more people. But after the election, that is not what happened. Bolsonaro bet on the crisis as a form of government, but when the crisis was not created by himself, his children or allies, the idea of the "myth" faded away.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION IN POST-DEMOCRACY

I just wanted to try to live what was spontaneously flowing out of me. Why was that so difficult for me? (HESSE, 2000, p. 9).

"Post-Democracy" or "Post-Truth"? Which concept better characterizes our context? Both are related, although "post-truth" is encompassed in "post-Democracy", insofar as I understand the latter as "absence of boundaries". "Post-truth" is characterized by the indistinction between truth and lies in favor of emotions and message. There is in all social segments, public and private space, "an empire without arguments. An empire of who knows best how to exercise violence" (SANZ, 2017, p. 52). If there is no longer a distinction between truth and lies and the interest of "managers" and "rulers" is to say what the masses of narcissistic consumers expect or to say it in a way that is accepted by the mere fact of being said, there is no democracy possible, because democracy requires politics as a condition of possibility, that is, common action and opinion formation. The sphere of human affairs consists of facts and events, "the invariable result of men living and acting together" (ARENDT, 2007, p. 287), and both are more fragile than axioms, discoveries, and theories, because they could be otherwise, given that men are capable of action.

But "post-truth" does not only happen in and about human affairs. It also affects "rational" and scientific truths. In the health crisis, provoked by COVID-19, Bolsonaro insisted in dismissing the seriousness of the pandemic⁹ and boasted a drug, chloroquine, as the panacea¹⁰, even without a reasonable, sustainable scientific basis and in accordance with experiences in other countries. It doesn't matter what the intention is. The important thing is the disregard for the distinction between truth and lies, the effects on ordinary existence, and the continuity of politics. Somehow, this is articulated with "neoliberal rationality" in the production of an imaginary that seeks to confuse reality with fictions in order to disable the destabilizing or transformative power of "truth", of Science, Literature, the Arts.

In terms of neoliberalism, "the problem is not that macroeconomists say things that are inconsistent with the facts. The problem really is that to other economists it comes down to the same thing that to macroeconomists the facts don't matter" (ESTEFANÍA, 2017, p. 80). The "solutions" to economic crises require, like any crisis, the confrontation of the facts, whatever they may be, and forceful answers to the questions they allow us to ask. For example, what is the purpose of the economy? What is the task of the State in the face of an economic crisis? What factors contributed to the crisis? What is the essence of the economy? The "post-truth" ideologues ignore the facts and aggravate the crisis with austerity measures, or they are hallucinating, that is, they lack the ability to think, to imagine.

For Arendt (2007, p. 325), "conceptually, we can call truth what we cannot change; metaphorically, it is the ground on which we stand and the sky that stretches above us. Truth, therefore, is a limit to "everything is possible"¹¹ and a guarantee of politics and democracy. Without truth there is no debate, no discussion, no possible communication. There is only violence, isolation and loneliness. It is from truth that we form opinions, adjusting them to the points of view of others and constituting a

⁹ "Bolsonaro once again minimizes the severity of the pandemic" (<https://www.dw.com/es/bolsonaro-minimiza-una-vez-m%C3%A1s-la-gravedad-de-la-pandemia/a-52934378>). "Bolsonaro minimizes and says coronavirus 'not all that'" (<https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/republica/breves/jair-bolsonaro-minimiza-pandemia-coronavirus/>).

¹⁰ "Bolsonaro says doctors hide chloroquine use" (<https://www.poder360.com.br/coronavirus/bolsonaro-insinua-que-medicos-escondem-uso-de-cloroquina/>). "Bolsonaro reinforces effectiveness of chloroquine and pinpoints Doria government" (<https://noticias.r7.com/brasil/bolsonaro-reforca-a-eficacia-da-cloroquina-e-alfineta-governo-doria-08042020>).

¹¹ Reference to the epigraph from the third part of *Origins of Totalitarianism*, "normal men do not know that anything is possible," by David Rousset (ARENDT, 2012, p. 413).

"common sense", that is, the sense of belonging to the human community. Without truth, rational (scientific, mathematical and philosophical) and factual, there is no "common world" and everything is lost in "narratives" or ideological disputes in which the strongest wins and imposes its world view.

In a study of ideology in Israeli textbooks, Nurit Peled-Elhanan (2019) finds that education propagates an idealized vision of Israel as a Jewish, white, modern, Western, and democratic society against enemies identified as "problem" or "Arab"-a label that serves to legitimize the Zionist narrative that Palestinians do not constitute a specific nation but belong to a larger group that has 21 states (PELED-ELHANAN, 2019, p. 85-86). The "idealization" is presented as both a reality and a project, because the Jews of Israel are mostly Eastern, and it masks racist and heterophobic attitudes toward non-Western Jews, Palestinians, and Arabs. The Palestinians' "view" of the conflict is represented as vision or "consciousness," not as fact¹². And the "facts" presented to students are constructions that eliminate the other as capable of speech and meaning. In terms of democratic education, "democracy" means that anyone can speak and act, and it is in speech and action that democratic individuals are constituted (MASSCHELEIN; SIMONS, 2014, p. 89). Israeli education, inferring from Peled-Elhanan's (2019) studies, is not democratic because it excludes from speech and action, from history and truth, the Palestinians, Arabs, Bedouins, and minorities living under the State of Israel. Textbooks thus naturalize silencing and marginalize the undesirables: "The marginalization of Arabs is emphasized in all geography textbooks: Arab towns and villages inside Israel are absent from maps and the Palestinian lifeworld does not appear in the texts" (PELED-ELHANAN, 2019, p. 147). In Brazil, silencing happens when municipal or state chambers try to pass bills that exclude the teaching and study of "gender identity," symbolically silencing and erasing minorities who do not see themselves and do not identify with the traditional binary model.

The textbooks studied reinforce prejudices and rationalize discriminations, creating, through education, the impossibility of a resolution to a conflict, because there is no truth under which all concerned can settle down and begin to dialogue. Facts favorable to the Palestinians are turned into "mere opinions", nullifying a priori any discussion, debate and common sense. Moreover, Israeli textbooks use "political" (proper to the state administration) strategies of negative representation - impersonalization, genderization, functionalization, demonization, and naturalization of discrimination (PELED-ELHANAN, 2019, p. 95-105) - and "linguistic" strategies in the composition of the textbooks - exclusionary visual representations, omission of Arab territories, culture, and activities, arrangement and highlighting of layouts that favor the Zionist-Israeli narrative, etc. For Arendt (2006, p. 16), lies are much more plausible,

since the liar has the great advantage of knowing in advance what the audience wants or expects to hear. He prepares his story very carefully for public consumption, in order to make it believable, since reality has the disconcerting habit of confronting us with the unexpected for which we are not prepared.

Thus, the lie must constantly adapt to reality, and when this happens, the truth of public life, the factor of stability to human affairs, disappears completely. "Acting men, when they feel themselves masters of their own futures, will be eternally tempted to make themselves masters of the past as well," argues Arendt (2006, p. 20). Hence the relevance of thinking of education in the sense of "transmission", of what the students will inherit and which they will be initiated and introduced to under the care of the adult, the representative of the world. However, what can be a gain for political idealization can also be counterproductive, since if there is no longer truth and only narrative, the narrative presented as truth is no more, nor less, than a narrative. The "other" continues to exist and to confront the need for

¹² As an example, the author presents a fragment from the history textbook *The 20th Century*: "In the consciousness of Arabs, the 1948 war and its consequences are understood as 'Shoá'. The Arab-Palestinians not only lost their land, but became a nation of refugees. In opposition, for the Israelis, the flight of the Arabs solved a terrible demographic problem, and even a moderate person like [the first president] Weizmann spoke about it as a 'miracle'. And in fact, early on it was clear that Israel was not going to allow the refugees to return. [...] The Arab leaders chose to use the refugees as a battering ram against Israel" (apud PELED ELHANAN, 2019, p. 116, emphasis added).

understanding¹³. Peled-Elhanan (2019, p. 131) concludes, "what determines the factual content of these books is not archival information, but the ideological voice for which they have to serve as ventriloquists and the 'consciously fraudulent' narrative they have to convey."

Educationally, truth grounds the pedagogical relationship when we understand that school must teach how the world is (ARENDT, 2007, p. 246). This implies that it does not matter much how we wish the world to be, nor whether we are ashamed of it being in ruins. Education is about providing the conditions of possibility for the new generations to enter the world and know how to situate themselves. Thus, knowledge, which aims at truth, is a fundamental aspect of what we bequeath to children and young people. Furthermore, education consists of an acknowledgement of ignorance, of what we do not know, of what we do not know, in order to search for knowledge and to be open to the world, to experience, and to the other.

Being human consists in the vocation of sharing what we know among all, teaching newcomers to the group how much they must know in order to make themselves socially valid. Teaching is always teaching the one who does not know, and the one who does not inquire, verify and deplore the ignorance of others cannot be a teacher, no matter how much he knows (SAVATER, 2011, p. 26-27).

Knowing, as an activity, begins at the moment of verification of ignorance. The teacher, as a mediator between the "new" and the "old", the "family" and the "world", begins education through the discovery of ignorance while paying attention to the equality constitutive of the school - everyone is capable of learning - and this equality is one of the conditions for citizenship and democracy. It is revolutionary because democracy is not the power of the (most) qualified and (most) competent (MASSCHELEIN; SIMONS, 2014, p. 89). The "space" of power is "empty" and, in Arendtian terms (2005), is constituted when human beings act together, regardless of their culture, history, economic condition, affiliation, or social *status*. Such is the "power of the powerless" that Václav Havel writes.

Education, in the "post-democracy", must pay attention to truth and knowledge, providing the new generations with access to that which is the foundation of knowledge and not only to discourses about truth, the world and/or nature. Having access to the truth, the world and nature only through textbooks is not enough for children and young people to enter the adult world. Hence the confusion between truth and opinion, or the transformation of all truth into opinion. Biology, Chemistry, Physics need to present the parts of the world/nature that belong to them, introducing the students to the theories, consensus and dissent of Science, through experiments, observations, comparisons and all the elements of proof accepted by the scientific community. History, dealing with factual truth, cannot be taught exclusively through the discourse of the teacher and the reading of the textbook. Factual truth is supported by documents and testimonies. It is from these that one comes into contact with human affairs. It is from the common ground of truth that we will construct and issue opinions, that we will seek meanings and strategies for coping with crises. Denying the facts aggravates the crisis and condemns people to isolation.

Getting in touch with the "world", converted in school into "subjects" and "contents", also requires students' action. Although "action" is a concept (in *The Human Condition*, by Hannah Arendt) especially political, related to adult activities, I believe that it is up to the school to create spaces for action specifically for schools¹⁴, because it is up to the school to introduce students to the "world" (ARENDT, 2007), and we insert ourselves in it with words and actions (ARENDT, 2005, p. 206). To act, for Arendt (2005), means to initiate, to start, to set in motion, in short, freedom. Action opens a breach in expectations (social, economic, political, family), expecting the unexpected, the improbable. Action is the condition for the possibility of politics, and politics, of democracy. There is no democracy without action, without the possibility of dissent and consensus.

¹³ In the textbooks analyzed by Peled-Elhanan (2019, p. 105), the "others" (Palestinians and Arab-Palestinians) also suffer "visual racism" when they are not represented in real contexts, being portrayed as immoral or criminal agents, presented as a homogeneous group, with negative cultural connotations or spatial images that objectify them or render their existence abstract.

¹⁴ I argued about this thesis in the article *Educational Action in Hannah Arendt* (PETRY, 2019).

Action in school, by students and teachers, is not the same as freedom to do what one wants. It is not part of a perspective without limits. The limit is the "world" and the authority of the teacher, representative of the world in relation to the children and responsible for development, learning and education. To act in the classroom means to act and respond to the demands, inquiries, problematizations, and "challenges" of the other, the colleagues and teachers, and of the "world", the "subjects". Democracy and action are not projects, it is necessary to affirm them in existence, in practice, otherwise the school becomes an instrument, and the students, objects of "educational policies" and adult interventions. For Gert Biesta (2013, p. 184),

schools that show no interest in what students think or feel, where there is no space for students to take initiative, where the curriculum is seen only as subjects that need to be inserted into students' minds and bodies, and where the question of the impact of one person's beginnings on the opportunities for others to begin is never taken into account, are clearly places where it is extremely difficult to act and be a democratic subject.

In the "Post-Democracy", limits are not respected, and the school tendency is to transform students into numbers or objects of an idealization, not giving them the opportunity to experience the world and themselves as new. Evidently, this authoritarian tendency does not begin with the context studied here, but it becomes one more aggravating factor in the possibilities of rupture, since it limits the appearance of the new and the new generations as unique individuals who have never existed before and will never exist after their death. In this sense, in action individuals reveal who they are, a discovery that is implicit in words and actions. At school, we do not appropriate a content, skill or competence. We respond to the world and, thus, we appear as singular and, at the same time, we correct our personal meanings with the meanings of others, creating a sense of community, of not being alone in the world, but sharing it with other alike and different.

In relation to limits, a central characteristic of "post-democracy", it is about overcoming them, that is, developing oneself, considering that childhood is a stage of development and not an end in itself. And the student must go beyond himself, that is, beyond family, social, political and economic expectations, starting over, beginning again, confronting the sayings that constitute him and the difficulties to become an adult and discover himself, his capabilities, to appear as a unique individual. Overcoming limits also means confronting what is not me, opening up to the other, to otherness, to the world, and respecting the child's knowledge does not mean ratifying it, "but knowing what level of construction they are at in order to, from there, take them to more complex and solid knowledge" (LA TAILLE, 2003, p. 26).

The other element pertinent to "democratic education" in 'post-democratic' contexts is respect for limits. Truth, as argued, is a limit to fantasy and ideology that tend to destroy the world, that is, the sphere of action, the public space. But limits are not contrary to the idea of freedom, they are related and only make sense when they interrelate. Freedom, in the political and educational sense, happens only in between, that is, in the relationship that individuals establish with each other and thus appear as singular beings. To the supposed or potential unlimitedness of the individual or groups, the price paid is not to appear as singular, as someone who matters, but only as functions. Unlimitedness, of "everything is possible," destroys others and freedom. For Arendt (2007, p. 195), "without a politically assured public sphere, freedom lacks the concrete space in which to appear." In educational terms, without the scholastic, that is, the space/time of "free time," freedom and the uniqueness of the "new" lacks the space in which to appear, because the school suspends family, economy, politics, social expectations. "School time is time made free and is not productive time" (MASSCHELEIN; SIMONS, 2013, p. 33). Therefore, schooling is a limit to the limitlessness of capital and "neoliberal rationality", because neither one (capital) nor the other (neoliberalism) are possible without overcoming and destroying limits, boundaries, contentions.

In the "post-democratic" society, there is no "free time" (*scholê*), freedom from the needs of "life", from the coercion of others and from politics (ARENDT, 2005, p. 40); everything becomes "productive time", in which the imperious needs of survival (work, consumption, fun, entertainment, business, and sleep) are the only ones and the ones endowed with "meaning". In such a context, there is no democracy, only management of the economy and the undesirables.

Another possible world" is not built through education. School is not an instrument and is located outside of social, political, economic or family demands. It is not an instrument because children and young people are not "objects" and because any "novelty" presented by adults to children would be old. The essence of education, according to Arendt (2007, p. 223), is "natality," the fact that children are born into the world. They are not born for work (labor), for the family, for politics, or for society, but to participate in the world, to take responsibility for it, and to appear as a singular individual. In the "post-democracy", the school represents a hope for the new that each generation brings. However, "we destroy everything if we try to control the new in such a way that we, the old, can dictate their future appearance" (ARENDT, 2007, p. 243). School, when it is school, is a limit to the "colonization" of existence by "productive time", giving human beings the opportunity to be introduced to the world.

This sense of limit, "limiting something", occurs when in school, of "free time", students face the tasks and contents ("world") and dedicate themselves to them, without the injunctions of the future ("what should I be?", "what is the use of this?") and the past ("I have always been", "I didn't make it", "my parents think that") in the here, in this, in the "present of incarnation", as Pennac (2008, p. 59) writes. This means that "it is necessary to stop shaking off the past as a shame and the future as a punishment" (PENNAC, 2008, p. 59). There are, in this reflection, two senses of limit: one "castrating" or "subjugating" and the other "emancipating". The first, when the past and the future are like "fences" that delimit the passage, the challenges, and where one will go. In the second, the limit is to adults (parents and teachers), not to present the past as failure and the future as condemnation. It is emancipatory in Rancière's sense, according to Masschelein and Simons (2014, p. 84), that is, of "reclaiming the time that the bourgeoisie required for itself, free or dead time, that is, a non-economic time."

This limit set by the scholastic needs a "technical" dimension, that is, to mobilize students for attention to the world, its presentation and creation. The scholastic method, in the sense of *skholé*, must be connected to the "world" of the young, but with the aim of removing them from this limit so that they can go beyond, as I argued above. The "going beyond" is only radical when it is not tied to instrumental logic, in which the future (outcome) guides actions and evaluations. Therefore, the tasks are not focused on solving problems, the skill required by the new business management jargon, but on being confronted with the "world" (the "other") and with oneself. In school, there are no problems, only questions, write Masschelein and Simons (2013, p. 61). The "method" or "technique" is means, not end. And not every "method" or "technique" can be used in the classroom nor is it a guarantee of an educational relationship that introduces students to the "world" and allows for confrontation and encounter with oneself and others.

The unrestricted confidence in a method is a mistake that Arendt already pointed out in *The Crisis in Education*. For the author (2007, p. 231), reducing teacher training to techniques and methods and not to "content" abandons students to their own resources and weakens the adult's source of authority, founded on "responsibility" towards the world and the development of students. Again, the term "content," "subject matter," "disciplinary knowledge," returns to the argument, and it is critical to highlight how the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC - High School) strips education of its essence and contributes to "post-democracy" by giving relevance to the development of skills and competencies while making content secondary to this "learning to learn" that summarizes the "language of learning" (BIESTA, 2013). Democracy, by the way, as a concept, does not appear once in the document.

If training for citizenship is one of the axes of the document on Social and Applied Humanities, its foundation is ethical, in the sense of the document: "ethics being understood as a judgment of appreciation of human conduct necessary for living in society (BNCC, 2018, p. 547). There is an intellectualist option of learning ethics and not one grounded in practices¹⁵. Such debate goes back to Greek antiquity, in particular, Plato and Aristotle.

In the Platonic *paideia*, recorded in *The Republic*, the ethical-formative thesis is that no one is voluntarily bad, that is, the wise individual is good (2019, §350b). Plato could not conceive that anyone,

¹⁵ The verbs used are expressive of this "intellectualist" option: analyze, identify, discuss, hypothesize, identify, criticize, use, counterpose, compare, understand, problematize, evaluate, contextualize, characterize, relate, know (BNCC, 2018, p. 559-565).

having access to eternal truths, would conceive of living contrary; having attained Good, would desire evil. Educationally, the implication is that moral education, which is citizenship, happens in conjunction with a philosophical-intellectual instruction through inquiry into the essence of what is. "Dialogue and the art of inquiry inaugurate the methodological or dialectical process of education, which has as its ultimate goal the attainment of virtue or excellence in human action," Paniavi (2008, p. 49) argues.

Aristotle, on the other hand, criticizes his master arguing that for Socrates "there is no such thing as incontinence, because no one, he said, acts contrary to what he considers best, conscious of being acting badly, except through ignorance" (ARISTOTELES, 1993, §1146a). There are individuals who, knowing the good (the right, the true), act in a contrary way, conscious, but unable to resist the desire. One desires the good, but acts in an evil way. In this sense, the BNCC is wrong to aspire to an ethical education based on an exclusive mode of education for the intellectual virtues and not for the moral virtues that imply an education by practices that become habits: "we become just by practicing just acts, moderate by acting moderately, and courageous by acting courageously" (Aristotle, 1992, §1103B). In our theme, a democratic education implies the practice of democratic values, not just the intellectual clarification of concepts or the reading of a manual. In the words of Garcia and Puig (2007, p. 20-21),

it is not possible for someone to acquire virtues through the explanations offered to them by adults, nor by simply memorizing these explanations. The acquisition of this knowledge requires exercise and participation in practices proper to a community.

The knowledge necessary for the exercise of democracy also involves values that are learned in practice, according to Aristotle's distinction of virtues. The exposition and/or theoretical study are not compatible with the full development of democracy, which is not simply a form of government, but a way of existence, the democratic one. No doubt the conceptual clarification, the historical, sociological and philosophical study of politics is fundamental. But if the desire is that knowledge has repercussions in action, it must be converted into practices that become habits through constancy, intentionality, and periodicity. It is not about determining behavior, but reflecting and creating conditions for decision making in situations of moral conflict based on "good reasons" (PUIG, 1998, p. 21). On the other hand, past actions, behaviors and attitudes, everything that happens to us needs to be the object of thinking, of the search for meaning. This is how thought is articulated with action, when the individual temporarily leaves the "world" to account for himself, in the activity of thinking, when I am no longer one, but two, and nobody would like to live with a criminal, murderer, liar, resentful, vengeful, hateful or immoral person.

Therefore, thinking has a privileged place in school education, to the extent that the school distances itself from the world (the school is not the world), at the same time that it suspends family, work, society, economy, and politics. In the *skholé* of the school, one cultivates imagination, reflection, thinking, knowing, while acting and appearing as a singular individual and, therefore, empowering democracy and politics.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the meaning of education in the context of "post-democracy". I understand that education should not be instrumental, that is, a means to an end external to it. Education is the hope that we have that the "new generations" will be introduced to the "world" and become responsible for it, which does not mean that the "introduction" is instrumental, but happens in "action", by the responses that students give to the questions of the world and to the appearance of other individuals (peers, teachers, employees). Action and discourse have knowledge and truth as their "ground." Both are limits to the fantasy (hallucinoses) that destroys the world and turns everything into motion (conspiracy theories, post-truth, ideology). In education, according to Arendt (2007), we learn how the world is, not a way of living. When we live, we do not exist in the singular, but as members of a species. To depersonalize, to de-singularize is the current practice of tyrannical and totalitarian regimes that are not interested in the action and existence of the "other". In this sense, it is

worth asking: what space does the "other" have to appear in school (physically and representatively, in textbooks, literary books, and works of art)?

Truth, knowledge, and the "other" confront us with our idealizations and/or illusions, and school is the privileged space of confrontation, of questions that demand answers and reflection by individuals. Therefore, the main theme that occupies "democratic education" in a "post-democratic" context is limits, because in "post-democracy" there is no respect for the limits of power (economic, political and, why not, individual and family). Since education is a requirement of "the world," it is reasonable not to entrust this activity to families or private social organizations designed to offer a service for private consumption. By leaving home, we have the opportunity to discover the "world" and, at the same time, ourselves as unique, breaking away from parental and maternal judgments and the opportunity to begin again, the miracle of action. The school is a limit to the family domain so that the child stops desiring the mother's desire and becomes desirous of her desires at the same time that she is educated on the limits, because there is a "world" that is not her and does not revolve around her and a reality that is constituted by "action" and is constructed by the "making" of men and women, depending on the correction of the senses ("common sense") that happens in the encounter.

The school also imposes limits to the "productive time", typical of Modernity and radicalized with the "neoliberal rationality", in which people are urged to see and conceive themselves as managers of themselves. Neoliberalism and "post-democracy" are articulated, because the first is the weakening of the limits to economic power at the same time that the violence of the state in managing the undesirables is increased. In school, there are no undesirables, and students are not their own entrepreneurs. They are not "human capital" to be developed and monetized, but human beings who discover the world and themselves. Thus, the schooling school is located in the here and now and studies this, the "present time": the limit to the past and to the future, a lapse in time to "lose oneself in time" and meet the "other" in his or her otherness and to decenter oneself, to come out of oneself and constitute a meaning for what happens.

Education in the context of "post-democracy" is not an education for democracy, as if it were a project, a future promise. Education is democratic, of the practices of democratic values that become habits, of the school experience of equality, not of appropriation of a present (knowledge) or future (social ascension) good, but of "being able to" as a starting point. Equality is not a project, but a hypothesis that begins every pedagogical action. School is a hope for the world and, at the same time, for the new generations, because regardless of what has happened or the tragic or triumphal promises of an uncertain future, each student has the ability to be interested in something and to develop in a meaningful way and to appear unique, despite the conformist expectations of society.

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