



Paul Ricoeur's thought contributes to a hermeneutics of our historical-educational condition¹

Aportes do pensamento de Paul Ricoeur para uma hermenêutica de nossa condição histórico-educativa

El pensamiento de Paul Ricoeur contribuye a una hermenéutica de nuestra condición histórico-educativa

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Abstract

The article is an essayistic nature, seeks to think about the role of a hermeneutics in our historical-educational condition for the sciences of education and for the subject who thinks about himself. This theorization about the epistemological and existential planes of research and foundational knowledge in the history of education was based on the contributions of the work *Memory, History, Forgetting*, by Paul Ricoeur (2007). The author convokes us to made it complex, at the phenomenological, epistemic, hermeneutic and existential levels, the recognition of images from the past, referents of the past, which manifest themselves in the present, and with them to produce understandings. The writing of history, and its symbolizing function, allows a society to situate itself by attributing a past in language. Thus, the history of education was thought of as knowledge capable of creating new sensibilities, in turn, create new relations with oneself, with others, with education and with the world.

Keywords: Hermeneutics of the historical-educational condition; Paul Ricoeur; School culture; History of education.

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Resumo

O artigo, de caráter ensaístico, busca pensar o papel de uma hermenêutica da nossa condição histórico-educativa para as ciências da educação e para o sujeito que pensa a si mesmo. Essa teorização sobre os planos epistemológico e existencial das pesquisas e dos saberes fundantes da história da educação deu-se a partir das contribuições da obra *A memória, a história, o esquecimento*, de Paul Ricoeur (2007). O autor nos convoca a complexificar, nos planos fenomenológico, epistêmico, hermenêutico e existencial, o reconhecimento das imagens de outrora, referentes do passado, que no presente se manifestam, e com elas produzir compreensões. A escrita da história, e sua função simbolizadora, permite que uma sociedade se situe ao atribuir-se um passado na linguagem. Assim, a história da educação foi pensada como um saber capaz de criar novas sensibilidades que, por sua vez, criam novas relações consigo, com o outro, com a educação e com o mundo.

Palavras-chave: Hermenêutica da condição histórico-educativa; Paul Ricoeur; Cultura escolar; História da educação.

Resumen

Este ensayo pretende considerar el papel de una hermenéutica de nuestra condición histórico-educativa para las ciencias de la educación y para el sujeto que se piensa a sí mismo. Esta teorización sobre los niveles epistemológico y existencial de la investigación y el conocimiento fundante de la historia de la educación se basa en las aportaciones de *Memoria, historia, olvido* (2007) de Paul Ricoeur. El autor nos convoca a complejizar, a nivel fenomenológico, epistémico, hermenéutico y existencial, el reconocimiento de las imágenes de antaño, referencias al pasado que se manifiestan en el presente, y a producir comprensiones con ellas. La escritura de la historia, y su función simbolizadora, permite a una sociedad situarse atribuyéndose un pasado en el lenguaje. Así, la historia de la educación fue pensada como un saber capaz de crear nuevas sensibilidades que, a su vez, crean nuevas relaciones con uno mismo, con los demás, con la educación y con el mundo.

Palabras clave: Hermenéutica de la condición histórico-educativa; Paul Ricoeur; Cultura escolar.

Introduction

Beneath history, memory and oblivion.
Beneath memory and oblivion, life.
But writing life is another story.
Unfinished.
(Ricoeur, 2007, p.513)

History, memory, forgetting, writing, life. The five words in the epigraph, transmuted into concepts in the Paul Ricoeur's thought, launch us into profound questions of a phenomenological, epistemic, hermeneutic and, above all, existential nature. It is known that a historical text does not simply seek to tell a past, to present an absence without past: it wants to explain/understand a past. He wants to interrogate and tension a past time, always provoked by the present. The product of this work, in turn, is played in the relation, it is sought/constructed to generate new present and future actions. It speaks to the being who thinks about his temporal condition. A being that takes place on the threshold of the rationalized time of clocks and calendars and the subjective time that takes effect and makes itself felt throughout the course of one's life. The writing of history, by exercising a symbolizing function, allows a society to situate itself by attributing a past in language. It is in this sense that Ricoeur (2007) calls us to think about the terms of a happy memory and history, that is, the possibility of encountering images from the past – the referents of that past, these brilliant past images that manifest themselves in the present – and, with them, produce understandings, explanations, meanings. Anchored in the author's thoughts, the history of education was thought here as knowledge capable of creating new sensibilities, in turn, create new relations with oneself, with others, with education, with society, in short, with the world.

For Magalhães (2022), education is constitutive of the human and history is its great observatory. Education, the author reminds us, is based on culture, values and actions. It is inscribed in the paths of life, in ways of thinking, in memories, experiences, decisions, joys and suffering. And it is in history that “concepts in the field of education were constituted and acquired property and meaning” (Magalhães, 2022, p. 172). Whether it is school education or education that takes place throughout our lives, when we ask ourselves how we came to become what we are, it is also to the history of education that we must direct this question.

The history of education, whether as a curricular component of teacher training or as a field of research, has undergone constant questioning about its relevance and legitimacy. We understand that such suspicions, although uncomfortable, should not be disregarded, but brought to the center of the debate. It is necessary to highlight the questions of an epistemic nature that they are capable of raising. What is a historical-educational object? How to theorize, document, model, explain and narrate education through history? What is the role of the history of education in the debate about current educational problems? A field of study that takes education in temporal intertwining as its reference, brings constant challenges, demanding a deeper understanding of the epistemic and phenomenological conceptual dimensions regarding memory, history and forgetting. It is in this sense that we proposed to call upon some of Paul Ricoeur's (1913-2005) postulates with a view to bringing his ideas closer to research in the history of education and reflections around a hermeneutics of our historical-educational condition.

For the philosopher, thinking about the hermeneutics of our historical condition is thinking about our own way of existing. We know, since Seneca, that the movement of the soul that seeks to know itself is a journey through the world, an understanding of current circumstances and concrete events that can affect us (Rago, 2013). Therefore, we must also ask ourselves: what is the role of educational historical knowledge in this search movement? What

does it mean to understand yourself as an educated subject under historical contingencies? Reflecting on the role of the history of education is also reflecting about such questions.

This article, of a theoretical nature, seeks to think about the contributions of the work *History, Memory and Forgetting* in analyzes of the epistemological and existential planes of research and the foundational knowledge of the history of education. If, as we understand, the time of education is the time of life, and that history and education are portions of life itself, it is necessary to reaffirm our historical-educational condition in reflections on this field of knowledge. We propose here to think about elements that, in the postulates brought by Ricoeur, may be suggestive to the history of education. The work methodology consisted of interweaving the author's theory with some of the themes and analytical perspectives that have stood out in the aforementioned field of investigation. So, we are guided by the motto: *what has been narrated and what can be narrated about the past of education?* The reflection was organized into two axes: school education and education beyond school. Before, it is better to place Ricoeur and his work in time, a task to which we move on immediately.

1. The author, the work, the time of writing

Bearing the traces of Ricoeur's immense theoretical culture, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, originally published in 2000, is considered his masterpiece, crowning a trajectory marked by philosophical questions about the past, time, narrative, history. When dialoguing with what he calls an enlightened public, the philosopher deeply immerses himself in the role of memory and historiography in contemporary times, placing the theme of forgetting on an equal footing. In our opinion, it is an immersive, reflective and foundational reading for those who dedicate themselves to thinking about history.

But who is Paul Ricoeur? He is presented by François Dosse (2017) as someone who maintained the exercise of speculation, of thought, someone who never offered easy/ready answers, activities that are essential for a good philosopher. In Dosse's words, Ricoeur was always concerned with "remaining available to others, to innovation, to the search for more justice and more humanity" (p. 7). François Hartog, in turn, considers him "the outsider who came closest to history" (2017, p. 89). In this sense, Dosse (2017) highlights that "for Ricoeur, the theme of memory makes possible the crossing of all his previous research themes: on the will, the unconscious, the correlation between the singular and the universal, the dialectic between the fidelity to a past and the promise of a horizon of expectation" (p.206). In fact, the philosopher had been working in the field of historical epistemology since the 1950s. However, in a context of great unifying paradigms of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Marxism and structuralism, he found a climate that was not very favorable to his theses. His considerations for history began to be taken into account after the decline of these metanarratives (Dosse, 2017). Moved by memory, a matrix concept for the production of history, he produced a necessary work, bringing to the debate the interweaving with history and forgetting.

We are talking about a man who lived through most of the 20th century in Europe, experiencing the effects of great traumas, generating memorialist impulses in multiple shades: "right, duty, weapon, testimony, custody, trauma, archive" (Hartog, 2017, p.41). The strength of all these greatnesses is concentrated in the fight to never forget the tragedies that profoundly marked this past time and to carefully observe their resonances in contemporary times. In the last years of that century, after having faced the production of three volumes of *Tempo e Narrativa*², possibly instigated by burning themes of that temporality, he wrote *A memória, a história, o esquecimento*, putting into play fundamental concepts that permeate, at the same time, the human condition and historiographical production, led by memory. The title, which

² RICOEUR, Paul. *Tempo e narrativa*. Tomo I; Tomo II; Tomo III. São Paulo: Editora WMF Martins Fontes, 2010.

summarizes the content of the book, begins precisely with *memory*, as the first reference, followed by *history* and, finally, *forgetting*. Purposefully in this order, the concepts are presented to us and woven throughout the chapters, highlighting a type of note brought at the end of the work and which appears here as an epigraph: “under history, memory and forgetting”. In other words, Ricoeur concludes the text, resuming the great conflict that goes through historical knowledge, on one side memory, on the other forgetting, a dispute always marked by power relations. In this interstice, history is produced, or rather, versions of it, possible narratives, credible, partial, singular, provisional, dated. Forgetting is understood by the author as a “disturbing threat to the phenomenology of memory and the epistemology of history” (p.423), as something harmful to the reliability of memory.

The tense time in the book is the same in which, immersed in it, he lives and writes. The emergence of memory, inscribed in presentism³, a “particular moment in our History” (Nora, 1993, p.7) helps to understand this *appreciation for the past*, in which feelings of duty and enchantment are mixed when faced with the traces of other times. The impetus to save is perhaps associated with the desire to feel more comfortable in relation to what they have bequeathed to us as humanity and, consequently, less insecure in this time populated by ephemeral things. The historian explains that “places of memory are born and live from the feeling that there is no spontaneous memory, that it is necessary to create archives... because these actions are not natural” (1993, p.13). Upon realizing the “obsession with the archive that marks the contemporary” (p.14), he analyzes that the need to create places of memory occurs “because there are no longer the means of memory” (p.7), that is, it evokes a shattered memory, residual to the locals, capable of offering some support, some sense of stability when everything seems fleeting.

In this time of writing the book, of tremendous disputes between memory and history, Ricoeur (2007) defends the seminal function of memory for history, without the intention of producing a claim for one over the other, “but of recognizing their fundamental differences and showing the relation that unites them” (p.56). In other words, he proposes a kind of appeasement, a harmony between both, in defense of what he calls “just memory”, but without giving up its founding character, without which, there is no history. He considers that it is necessary to recognize the specificities, capabilities and limits of both. It concludes that this recognition of what memory and history can and cannot do allows for mutual strengthening, something like feedback and a guarantee of maintaining each person's place in the knowledge that calls itself historical, considering that it is through the approximation of memory that history is made.

For Ricoeur, there is a hermeneutic in the comprehensive explanation of history. In this sense, a central idea in his reflections on the historiographical operation is the notion of interpretation. No longer the event itself, but its construction over time, the disappearance and resurgence of its meanings. For the author, “the historian is the one who questions the documents. His art is born as hermeneutics, it continues as understanding, which is essentially the interpretation of signs”, that is, the idea of interpreting is something very present in the historiographical operation, with a view to developing an understanding of the phenomenon investigated. In his words, “other people’s understanding becomes the historian’s guiding star” (p.350). Thus, he considers that the facts, according to the questions formulated and the

³ Hartog invested in reflections around the sensation of temporal acceleration and, in parallel, analyzes the rapid growth of the gift category. He calls these phenomena presentism. This eternal present has no adherence to traditional versions of the past and also does not project a future, it is a “massive, invasive, omnipresent present, which has no other horizon than itself [...]” (Hartog, 2006, p. 270). However, as paradoxical as it may seem, if, on the one hand, presentism has no attachment to the great narratives of the past, the same does not happen in relation to memory. In Hartog's words, “[...] this present found itself restless, in search of roots, obsessed with memory. Confidence in progress was replaced by the concern to save and preserve” (2006, p.271).

documentation selected, can always be understood in another way, amidst controversies and conflicts among rival interpretations. Ricoeur (2007) advises that the defense of an assumed interpretation must be based on plausible, clear, “possibly probable” arguments, within the principle of likelihood. And, finally, he maintains that “behind the interpretation, there always exists in the impenetrable, opaque, inexhaustible background of personal and cultural motivations, of which the subject has never finished realizing” (p.351).

This interpretation of historical time is not only for scientific purposes, but as a possibility for human action, for dialogue among generations, an action on the present (Dosse, 2017). From Nietzsche, Ricoeur emphasizes how much life needs the service of history and the historian's own activity is commanded by life and not by the search for knowledge. From Koselleck (2006), Ricoeur highlights the idea of “historical experience” as something more than an epistemological territory, an authentic relation with the world, even comparable to physical experience. And we add: it is also an action on oneself, it is the possibility of questioning one's own life, the itineraries and processes through which we educate ourselves, in short, interrogating our historical-educational condition.

2. School time: cultures and practices

[the existential presuppositions of historiographical knowledge] are existential in the sense that they structure the very way of existing, of being in the world, of this being that we are individually. They concern, firstly, the insurmountable historical condition of this being (Ricoeur, 2007, p.299).

In the epigraph, Ricoeur (2007) invites us to think about our existence in the world, this being that we are in our individuality and singularity. A being that is realized in inescapable historical injunctions and is also produced through the educational phenomenon. A being, therefore, the result of historical-educational conditions that demand, from the sciences of education, an interpretation of this historical condition. And such a hermeneutic exercise cannot do without making a theme the school and its culture.

In a brief overview, it can be said that, despite the multiple and scattered experiences known throughout history, it is above all in the 19th and 20th centuries that the school rises and consolidates itself as a rationalized product of the educational phenomenon. It is from this period that the State takes upon itself the task of educating, through a systematization of educational structures around the school model. This occurs through formalization of an institutionalizing nature, with a view to the massification of this form of education, using methods such as mandatory education. This process was also marked by the historical context of the development of capitalist economies and the affirmation of national states and different nationalisms.

Parallel to the constitution and progressive democratization of this social institution, a scientific domain developed around education, with the emergence of medical-hygienist discourse and Psychology, which, as Magalhães (2004) points out, initially as a provider of basic information about the sensorial and spiritual nature of the human being, evolving towards observation and measurement, through the use of tests. Educational sciences would have been created in the sense of objectification and standardization, in analogy to natural sciences and focused mainly on measuring the differences between what was expected and what was obtained. However, according to the author's assessment, the production of knowledge about education has become more sensitive to multifactorial things, valuing interactive and subjective processes.

It is in this sense that, in recent decades, many areas of knowledge within the humanities have turned their attention to ordinary practices and experiences, influenced mainly by cultural views. It has been no different with educational sciences, which, despite their late rise as an investigative field (for a long time seen only as applied knowledge), have shown a vigorous production of studies that take the educational phenomenon from a broader perspective. The concept of school culture is one of the main exponents of these new analytical tools that enrich the approaches and themes investigated. “Return to experience”, “empirical knowledge”, “practical reasons”, “arts of doing”, are some of the expressions used by Escolano Benito (2017) to characterize the epistemological turn represented by the centralization in action as the source of all cultural construction. This is the first notion of the concept of school culture, which seeks to think about education beyond mere instrumental mediation, the regulation of practices and formal discourses. In other words, the practice thought of as a source of culture, going “to things as they present themselves in the world of life” (Escolano Benito, 2017, p.24). Thus, the basis on which research from the perspective of school culture is based is precisely seeking to identify educational practices born from experience. It is through this look at the world of practices that we seek to build new knowledge about the school, historically understanding this institution from the plan of action and not just the norms that sought to regulate it.

This movement also ended up opening a field of analysis regarding the impact of school on human life and how, for us, educated beings, this institution is a space for creating cultures, developing our identities and an important setting for our childhood and youth experience, and which therefore, occupies a considerable place in memory (Escolano Benito, 2017). This is how we incorporate certain *habitus*, such as “body practices, gestures, forms of writing and graphics, modes of orality...” (p.178) that identify us as subjects, in a certain way, shaped by the school experience. This reflection is echoed in the words of Ricoeur (2007), who, when going into the depths of understanding the phenomenology of memory, points out that “we remember what we did, experienced or learned in a particular circumstance” (p.53) and, in this exercise of remembering, the memory of the body, yours and others, of the space where you lived, “the horizon of the world and of worlds, under which something happened” (p.53).

Affected by the postulates developed by Nora (1993), Ricoeur points out how “remembered things are intrinsically associated with places” (p.57), as true inscriptions, establishing a link with memories. We can think about school from this perspective, after all, “inhabited places are memorable par excellence” (p. 59). Thus, sensitive memories of the school space, people, flavors, smells, gestures, fears and joys can populate memories, always updated by the present. The severe teachers’ gestures, the dark corridors of the school building, the games during recess, the fear of evaluations, the daily frustrations, the taste of the snacks or meals served, the disagreements among colleagues, all of this lives within us, carries an ontological and it can either be evoked as a memory or converted into an object by the historiography of education.

Along these lines, one of the themes visited has been ordinary writings produced in the school space. These are everyday spellings that are commonly discarded, but when preserved, they contribute to the construction of a memory of school education. Cunha (2007) reinforces the meaning of studying the singularities of these writings that denote the school's activities, promoting an increase in understanding of school culture.

Castillo Gomez (2012) observes how much interest in these materials has been growing as a kind of debt to the history of education, and, at the same time, emphasizes the “restlessness in their search” (2012, p.67). From this perspective, we often locate them in personal archives, “the most interesting places for historical research”, according to Angela de Castro Gomes (1998, p.127). In line with this thought, Heloísa Bellotto (2017) tells us about personal archives as an intriguing path open to investigation. In addition to predictabilities, research in this field gives rise to the unexpected, contradictions, transgressions, and therefore moves away from the

idea of finding a coherent self as a reflection of its archiving practices. Considering that “wherever we go we leave behind a trail of evidence in the form of documents” (Cox, 2017, p. 185), we postulate here the meaning of these stored items that, commonly, are in the care of their owners or their families.

And where else can these ordinary writings be located by researchers? Taking contemporary discussions about educational heritage⁴ as guides, school/university institutions have been paying attention to the meaning of constituting places for their memories for some decades. Some go beyond their own safeguarded records and establish themselves as educational memory centers. These are preferred places, identified within the scope of research into the history of education, having the past, patrimonial school culture as documentary basis.

Valuing these forms of writing and giving them the status of documents for the historiography of education is related to the documentary revolution (Ricoeur, 2007), typical of the historiographical shifts at the end of the 20th century, aligned with the rise of memory as the matrix of history. Thus, the history of education begins to recognize what the writing of ordinary people is capable of telling us about the past (Cunha, 2019). By highlighting the difference between document and the notion of trace⁵, Ricoeur calls into question the non-self-evident character of the document: “it is sought and found, 'circumscribed', 'constituted', 'instituted' document by the historian's questions” (2007, p.189). And further: “Trace, document, question thus form the basic tripod of historical knowledge” (p.188). Therefore, the document has the ability to say something about another temporality, to offer a reference for in-depth analysis of the phenomena investigated. Looking at the epistemology of historical knowledge, and the role of this knowledge as a foundation for educational sciences, presupposes attention and care towards the traces and, as said, potential documents. In the universe of ordinary papers produced in the school environment, we chose to focus here on three documentary typologies of written culture: notebooks, press produced by students and souvenir albums, many of them understood as ego-documents.⁶

In this movement of interrogation about cultures and practices that have their setting in the school space, notebooks emerge as artifacts capable of interrogating our condition as educated beings. As “disciplined scriptures” (Meda, 2014), they are important sources for the study of school practices. Like half-open windows, they allow us to see a little of their *author*, of the teaching and learning practices of the teacher's didactics, the pedagogical conceptions of an institution, sensibilities, sociability networks, in short, they denote aspects of public education policies, of macro policies of a country, of a given historical context. Therefore, they are artifacts that have come to be valued, in an effort by historiography to examine aspects of what is experienced in the classroom (Mignot, 2008). With their discipline, formalities, almost absence of freedom, they represent what the school does, and, as Rogerio Fernandes explains, “they design a privileged territory, defining a web of relations whose plurality constitutes one of the ways of living and seeing the school” (2008, p. 50).

⁴ We highlight some studies here: Augustin Escolano, 2017; Souza-Chaloba, 2013; Conceição and Paulilo, 2023, Peres, 2019.

⁵ In his words “nothing, as such, is a document, even if all residue from the past is potentially a trace” (RICOEUR, 2007, p.189).

⁶ Ego-documents refer to the different ways of expressing, through writing, any type, shape or size, feelings and experiences, and through which it is possible to discover an ego (Amelang, 2005). In view of these definitions, we understand that it is a documentary typology linked to personal experiences with the purpose of preserving itself and that, like other common papers, for different reasons, they have resisted time and disposal. It is important to remember that research with these documentary corpora require different interpretative exercises, as it is unlikely that we will find them in large quantities, as we commonly work with a few examples, in the key to the singularity of school practices.

Another practice related to school culture in its written manifestation, which can be scrutinized by the sensitive eye of the education historian, is the school press. Present throughout much of the 20th century, it is evidence of the New School principles, initiated by Célestin Freinet, from the late 1920s and disseminated at different levels of education (Gonçalez-Monteagudo, 2013). In some of these forms, an effective presence of students can be observed, in others, the institutional discourse is what predominates. In any case, it is one of the few traces that allow us to get closer to these students of the past, whose narratives are often forgotten by the history of education.

We know that the possible difficulties in reconstructing the history of childhood and youth reside in the almost absence of records that were produced by the subjects themselves and few that have survived the course of time. Therefore, these periodicals produced and read by students, in different media, purposes and temporalities, acquire the status of documents that allow analyzing, among other aspects, children's, youth and school cultures in their multiple manifestations, as well as the history of their institutions and the values of their communities. As products of school culture, they show evidence of knowledge and practices identified with precepts of civility, since texts often seek to discipline and prescribe codes of conduct, thus allowing a glimpse of the reality of educational actions.⁷

We also draw attention to the notebooks or *souvenir albums*, artifacts of a typology that are difficult to precisely define, as they are on the threshold of the personal and the school, still little explored by the historiography of education. Understood by Cunha (2004) as a “refuge for the exercise of friendship” (p.348), “intimate writings without being confidential” (p.354), the study of these materials makes it possible to discover ritual forms of paying homage and celebrating affections at school. Closely associated with the feminine world, they are emblematic of school culture, as writing and drawing in these notebooks required the mobilization of school learning, especially reading practices, the exercise of impeccable handwriting, copying without errors or drawings made with care. Located between the private and the public, they belonged to a student and circulated in the classroom and in different spaces of the school and could be taken to other places constituting a network of authors and readers of messages intended for the notebook's owner. In this sense, they mix generations, as messages from teachers, aunts and mothers are commonly found. Stimulated by school, they were very present until the 1970s as a means of celebrating friendship, especially during the school years (Cunha, 2004). Many were kept as relics, memories of childhood and youth, intimate documents, but which also serve as supports for school memory.

These three documentary types, notebooks, journals and souvenir albums, are signs of school culture and understood as educational heritage. It must be considered that they are all, as Ricouer points out, “enactments of the past” (2007, p.76), drawing on the strong concept of representation worked on in the work. They are scriptures of the common order, capable of offering evidence of school knowledge and practices, of everyday school life, in its multiple manifestations. However, although they allow for a “plurality of nuances observable in school writings” (Castillo Gomez, 2012, p.68), they are incapable of saying everything and, like any other traces of the past, they have their limits and strengths. Furthermore, kept by people or institutions, these artifacts of written culture are carriers of discourses and produced under different historical contingencies, demanding accurate critical analysis.

All the considerations presented here point to the potential of a close look at written culture, produced, in different media, by students in their daily activities. What does the historian do with these papers transmuted into documents? He questions them, interprets them.

⁷ We highlight some studies about school press: AUTOR, 2015; Amaral, 2013; Bastos and Ermel, 2013.

When reflecting on the role of interpretation in the historiographical operation, Ricouer (2007) emphasizes that this action carries within it the constant tension between the subjective and objective dimensions of history. An objectivity that is substantiated by the historian's intention of truth and the validation laws of historical knowledge, established by the environment. It is a subjectivity that brings into play the sensitivity of the being that establishes the trivial as a document and interrogates it in its own way, singularizing each work of historical interpretation of the past. For the author, it is in this operational complex that the correlation between the subjective and objective aspects of historical knowledge occurs.

In order to conclude, we highlight that reflections on the possibilities of a hermeneutics of our historical-educational condition from the school space were here centered on the issue of some documents of written culture and their interpretative potential. There are, however, many other ways to reach signs of the school's past times: through oral memory narratives that look for the lived dimension of the school, iconographic sources, architecture and school furniture, are some examples. Likewise, there can be multiple approaches and thematic arrangements from which the school space is viewed: history of educational institutions, history of educational policies, history of school subjects, history of curricula and teaching methods, history of teacher training, among other thematic possibilities.

However, as we know, the history of education transcends issues that concern the school, this invention of modernity that has become so powerful in the contemporary world to the point that we equate it with education. We will talk about other study possibilities in this field below.

3. A history of education beyond school

As previously mentioned, the epistemological turn that gave centrality to the world of practices and experience raised the concept of school culture to a position of notoriety, making this notion start to function as a great inducer of studies, carrying within it guidelines, circumscribing themes, signaling possible or validated research within its scope, bringing researchers together in investigative communities. These are aspects to consider in the always important reflections about the conditions of possibility in the knowledge production. However, if on the one hand the school protagonism is fully justifiable in light of its scope and historical impact on education, on the other hand, it is also true that school and education are often read as synonyms, which is why it is necessary to theorize the educational phenomenon in non-school spaces.

Ricoeur confesses that he owes the way he approaches the epistemology of history in his work *A memória, a história, o esquecimento* to Certeau. And Certeau (2014) tells us precisely about a certain illusion of knowledge, the illusion of the distant observer who looks at the characters of the great human text represented by the city. Certeau's always critical stance towards knowledge reminds us that, in addition to knowledge framed in previously established explanatory models, in addition to statistics and consolidated concepts there are always everyday practices that escape us.

It is known that cultural perspectives allowed new perspectives about the educational phenomenon. Despite this situation, themes linked to educational practices that transcend the space of the formally established school still occupy a somewhat peripheral position in the history of education. Certeau's (2014) considerations about the ordinary of everyday life inspire us to think about the place that research about experiences in non-school spaces, institutions and practices can occupy in this field of research, an important reflection due to the notorious predominance that themes related to school education have had in our midst.

For Magalhães (2004), the polysemy of the concept of education constitutes the main basis of the epistemology of these sciences. Here we reach an important point in the matter, because the notions of interaction and subjective are the keys to reading this polysemic character of the concept of education, even though school dominates our lives in such a way that it becomes difficult to think about education outside of it. However, the subjects' interactive processes occur in multiple ways and at all times, diffuse throughout the social way. Such subjectivations are as significant as they are difficult to grasp, given their intangible nature. It is precisely this polysemy identified as an epistemological basis that invites us to think about education beyond the school walls.

An analytical stance towards the various spaces in which we educate ourselves (family, school, church, city, work) allows us to see that education is everywhere in which we acquire ethical values, beliefs, habits. It is through social interactions that we invent and amplify aesthetic codes and, consequently, the ways of perceiving the world and oneself. These are places that transcend the limits of school, in which we are subjectivized by discourses and representations, and which equally make up the historical-educational conditions in which we forge our being. It is necessary to remove non-school educational experiences from invisibility, *make them speak* and grant them the status of research objects. In this sense, despite the diagnosis of the vast predominance of themes related to school in the history of education, important studies have been carried out around non-school institutions, spaces and training discourses. We will now briefly present some of these works, as an illustration of the potential of these themes for a hermeneutics of our historical-educational condition. The list of works presented below, therefore, does not intend to present itself as a state of the art or a systematic review of investigations into non-school educational spaces and institutions. We seek to contemplate studies related to the field of history of education, which have been presented in forums such as the Congresso Brasileiro de História da Educação (CBHE), especially in the thematic axis *Processos Educativos e práticas de sociabilidade não escolares* and also works that we have identified in our circulation as researchers in the area.

One of the examples of this education operated in other supports and everyday practices are the printed materials that circulate beyond schools. It is possible to find studies that focus on the educational dimension of periodicals and manuals about hygiene and body care (Oliveira, 2021), or even education by the press through the propagation of speeches and production of memories, as in the research by Silva (2022) about the paper of the newspaper *A Notícia*, in São José do Rio Preto-SP, around the ideas of the so-called *Revolução Constitucionalista de 1932*. In the same direction of analysis of discourses contained in periodicals and which aim or are capable of educating, it has the study by Bezerra (2017), which investigated the printed *Mensagem da Apaes*, a periodical created and edited, since 1963, by the *Federação Nacional das Apaes* (Fenapaes). The author identified the impact of the speeches contained therein on the specialized education of exceptional people⁸ and on political debates about this topic, and how they were able to forge a certain way of conceiving and reading exceptionalism in Brazil, associated with the ideas of philanthropy, therapeutics and Christian benevolence.

Education through printed materials was also discussed by Campos (2009), who addressed speeches and representations about women and children that circulated between 1920-1940 in the press of the *Araraquarense* area (currently Northwest *Paulista*) and which propagated new lifestyles, patterns of behavior and sociability. Regarding the

⁸ Bezerra (2017) justifies the use of the expression exceptional in his work in the sense that it is disseminated by Apaes and its Federation, despite the criticism received by this term today. As this is an investigation of a historiographical nature, the author chose to maintain the nomenclature used in the target temporality of the research, in order not to incur anachronism.

education of women beyond school spaces, we also have the Doctoral Thesis by Maria Teresa Santos Cunha (1995) entitled *Educação e sedução, normas, condutas, valores nos romances de M Delly*, which focuses on novel reading practices among young people urban women from the 1940s and 1950s. The author discusses issues related to reading, the representations in these narratives, their plots and precepts of civility as ways of educating readers. It is also worth mentioning the Maria Celi Chaves Vasconcelos's works about the education of nobility women in the 19th century (2004, 2020, 2018), through studies of their intimate writings, as well as the work of the preceptors.

Other important social spaces in which the educational element is present are religious practices, which often use printed communication as a teaching way. Nascimento and Alves (2022) investigated a type of Protestant publication – the catechism – and highlighted the typography of seven works that are part of the collection of the Presbyterian Historical Archive, published between 1864 and 1911, analyzing how these productions contributed to the inculcation of moral values and educational and religious knowledge among part of the Brazilian population. A similar approach can be found in the study by Albrecht and Weiduschadt (2021) on the magazine *O Jovem Luterano*, a youth communication vehicle coordinated by the *Sínodo de Missouri (Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil)* and which circulated between 1929 and 1973. The magazine's objective was guide the social and religious life of young people and adolescents, in addition to being a space to promote the socialization of cultural and recreational activities developed with this group.

Still on the relations between religiosity and education, we mention the investigations of Oliveira F ilho (2021) about the training experiences lived within the group of *Penitentes Peregrinos Públicos*, from Juazeiro do Norte-Ceará, an organization guided by the intention of carrying out a broad reform in the ways of life of its members. The study by Loss (2021), in turn, focused on education in the *Candomblé* area *Ilê Axé Omilodê*, in João Pessoa-PB, highlighting practices that range from a pedagogy of mystical contents to learning culinary and sewing techniques, instrument making, natural medicine, among others.

A topic that has also emerged in research about training experiences in a broader sense is that of student residences. If sometimes, they were the result of government initiatives and/or universities themselves, in many cases, the foundation, administration and financing of these places were carried out by private initiatives, patronage, political, religious and national groups, among other community ties and belonging. In common, the character of student's organizations, taking the form of entities, associations, corporations or even cooperatives, often outside the universities and escaping their formal control. It is possible to find studies that analyze university student housing organizations as non-school training spaces, sociability and political organization (Hinterholz; Almeida, 2019; Bezerra, 2021; Hinterholz; Ermel, 2023; Hinterholz, 2023), the processes of internationalization, exchanges, national development and intellectual enrichment seen from student residences (Vázquez Ramil, 2023; Müller, 2023) or even from the occupation of these spaces by women (Martins, 1992; Almeida, 2018; Costa, 2020). All these investigations point in the direction that the university is not restricted to its curriculum, its formal structure and the formally attestable knowledge that it teaches and promotes. Many other practices and spaces of sociability revolve around it. It would even be possible to speak of a student culture, in addition to a school culture, through which one can think about ways of behaving, conducting oneself, practices that perform being a student. Arts of doing that often evade or escape the school and university space and its domain, or even deliberately seek to emancipate themselves from it, oppose it, deny it, tension it.

It is also worth highlighting the topic of teacher associations. According to Magalhães (2004), teaching associations and unions are educational institutions, carriers of symbolic and material cultures. The Portuguese historian understands them as educational institutions of production/mobilization, that seek to achieve certain objectives and form an identity for their members. Another approach to teaching associations is Nóvoa's (1995), who evaluates the significance of this practice for the professionalization of teaching and the formation of a professional identity. In this author's understanding, associativism "plays a central role in the development of *esprit de corps* and in defending the teachers' socio-professional status" (p. 20). Agreeing with Magalhães, Nóvoa argues that this trajectory cannot be taken as homogeneous, it is full of struggles and conflicts, of hesitations and setbacks, tensions that we must be aware of. In addition to these studies, it is important to mention the works of Paula Vicentini and Rosario Lugli (2009) and Libânia Xavier (2013).

Examples of efforts to scrutinize the multiple spaces in which we educate ourselves multiply: Souza (2022) sought to understand the educational function of the *Colônia Penal Feminina do Recife* between the years 1945 and 1990, education being viewed based on the institution's objectives towards both a moral regeneration and the professional training of the inmates; Pinto (2020) investigated the biographical trajectory of the actress Aracy Côrtes and the diffuse educational experiences on the amateur stages of Rio de Janeiro (1900-1920), especially the experiences at the *Sociedade Dramática Particular Filhos de Talma*, from the perspective of dramatic guilds as spaces of social formation, promoters of literacy practices, lectures, meetings and debates on theatrical texts that permeated the city's daily life. Lopes' research (2021) focused on learning around gender roles, analyzing the *invention of virility* based on the memoirs of Paraíba writer José Américo de Almeida (1887-1980).

If, as we argue here, education occurs throughout life and through multiple institutions, spaces, supports and discourses, the interpretation of our historical-educational condition requires a complex and open hermeneutic, which promotes dialogue among the history of education and the history of youth cultures, the history of intellectuals, the history of the student movement, the history of unions, the history of women, among many other thematic arrangements of studies about the past.

Such reflections they call us to tension the concepts and explanatory models that we use, in order to release and stir up investigative possibilities that abound in everyday life. History, as we know, constitutes fundamental knowledge for education, contributing to the understanding of the historicity of educational processes and the expansion of their epistemological base. It is desirable, therefore, that you seek to contemplate the multiple educational forms present in societies, that you seek to distance yourself from what is sometimes so close, so that you can actually see it. It is from this perspective that we are urged to think about education in its permeability with so many other dimensions of life: art, politics, work, believing, eating, living, loving... An invitation to release the inherent polysemy to the education of any imprisonments and to ask ourselves about the epistemological or conceptual peaks that have obstructed new themes and questions. If educational practices that transcend school spaces are difficult to grasp, evade current explanatory models, let them generate questions about our educational culture and ourselves. Ultimately, using the hermeneutic to our condition as educational beings, scrutinizing the subjective processes through which we became what we are, this is the challenge, the difficulty of answering which is proportional to the importance of the question.

Conclusion

This essay sought to think about the reverberations of a hermeneutics of our historical-educational condition for the sciences of education and for the subject who thinks about himself. The path chosen was that of theorization, based on the contributions of the work *A memória, a história, o esquecimento* by Paul Ricoeur (2007), on the epistemological and existential planes of research and the fundamental knowledge of the history of education. In the intention of establishing relationships with research themes in our field, we are also guided by the motto: *what has been narrated and what can be narrated in the history of education?*

As seen, the past, present and future are dimensions that interpenetrate, indispensable to the awareness of one's own being. This finding, in line with the ideas discussed in this article, leads us to some reflections: How do I think about the education I had? Is it the one I wished I had? What is there about desire, resentment, presence and absence in the history of educational processes and, therefore, of our constitution as educated subjects and educators? Thinking about the hermeneutics of our historical-educational condition is thinking about the ways in which existences were historically forged, the ways in which practices, discourses, political, economic and cultural contexts shaped sensibilities. We are educated bodies. We are bodies with history.

Ricoeur helps us understand that neither history nor memory have exclusivity over discourses about the past. And memory cannot be reduced to an object of history, nor can collective memory, in the context of memory abuse, want to subjugate history. It is in the confrontation through an open dialectic, says Ricoeur, that both can preserve themselves from this crossing of limits. The historiographic narrative, through its relation with memory, invents the past. A past, therefore, that is not only the object of history, but that finds the conditions of its existence in it. When telling us that “genealogy is the institution that makes life human” (p. 390), Ricoeur (2007) reminds us of the dynamics of genealogical movements, in turning to the past in search of “living speakers in an institution course” (p.390). A search, therefore, for meanings and what makes us human. And if it is true that history is a science of the living speaker, it is also of the living writing, the living reader, the living teacher and student.

The history of education produces a discourse directed at education, having it as its object and considered a fundamental knowledge. Likewise, it can be said that it is in the epistemology of historiographical practice that the history of education finds its scientific instruments. Therefore, it speaks to education, based on history. But this necessary circumscription of knowledge to the research fields to which it relates and its location in a curricular matrix of teacher training courses must not imprison the history of education in a utilitarian sense, suffocating understandings about its role in a hermeneutics of our historical educational condition. Historiographical knowledge is interesting and important to life. And it is knowledge produced under the contingencies of that same life. A knowledge that does not come from elsewhere, from a place that could be called outside, but from the immanence of our own human condition, its limits and possibilities.

These considerations bring to light the double role of the historian: artisan of history and actor/citizen interested in collective destinies. Here, once again, Ricoeur makes us focus on a central epistemic question of the historical operation: it is a reflected interpretation of the past, an act of language, of enunciation, from which an objectifying discourse about elapsed times is constructed. For the philosopher, it is in this operational complex that the correlation between the subjective and objective aspects of historical knowledge resides. Interpretation is involved in all phases of the historiographical operation and it is what

controls the status of truth in history. It is in such terms that a critical philosophy of history would reveal an ethics of historical knowledge and the intervention of the historian could be understood not as parasitic, “but constitutive of the mode of historical knowledge” (Ricoeur, 2007, p.349). Inevitably, the subjective dimension is, for Ricoeur, precisely the human aspect of the historical object, because ultimately, what history wants is to understand and explain man, to encounter him, to confront the other, in an almost psychoanalytic work of searching for this other subjectivity.

The historiographical operation is a perpetual movement of manufacturing new images, resulting from the dialectic between memories, supposedly consolidated historiographical narratives, interpretations and excavations of the past, demanded by the present. Thinking critically about education requires turning to the past, searching for that other, agitating and making speak what is not and cannot be anymore, but already was and continues to produce representations, meanings and actions in the present. It is at the confluence of a hermeneutics of our historical condition and the hermeneutics of our condition as educational beings that the history of education finds its field of work, its meaning and its contribution to the present and future of the city.

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