



**Classifying and institutionalizing childhood:
connections between family and school in Arthur Ramos's work *The Problem Child*¹**

Classificar e institucionalizar a infância:
conexões entre a família e a escola em *A criança problema*, de Arthur Ramos

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Abstract

In this text we propose to analyze the writings of the physician, anthropologist and psychoanalyst from Alagoas Arthur Ramos (1903-1949) on the so-called “problem child”, formulated in the late 1930s, based on observations of professionals in some public schools in the then District Federal, Rio de Janeiro, between the years 1934 and 1939, the so-called Experimental Schools. We will focus on the type of child labeled by Ramos as chased away, which in the book was intended 4 chapters where the author explores how the conditions of the child's vital environment are determinant for their learning, sociability, and conditions or not for possible misfits. The objective of the text is to reassemble part of the sociological, educational and psychological history about the vision of poor childhood in Brazil, and how this interpretation carried out a form of sanitary subjection of those children, that used to be seen as potential problems for the nation, since poverty and eviction were closely related.

Keywords: Arthur Ramos; Problem children; School; Family.

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Resumo

Neste texto temos como proposta analisar os escritos do médico, antropólogo e psicanalista alagoano Arthur Ramos (1903-1949) sobre a chamada “criança problema”, formulados no final da década de 1930, a partir de observações de profissionais em algumas escolas públicas do Distrito Federal, Rio de Janeiro, entre os anos de 1934 e 1939, as denominadas Escolas Experimentais. Nos deteremos ao tipo de criança rotulada por Ramos como escorraçada, que no livro foi destinado 4 capítulos onde o autor explora como as condições do ambiente vital da criança são determinantes para sua aprendizagem, sociabilidade, e condições para possíveis desajustes ou não. O objetivo do texto é remontar parte da história sociológica, educacional e psicológica sobre a visão da infância pobre no Brasil, e como essa interpretação realizou uma forma de sujeição sanitária daquelas crianças, vistas como potenciais problemas à nação, uma vez que pobreza e escorraçamento estavam intimamente relacionados.

Palavras-chave: Arthur Ramos; Criança problema; Escola; Família.

Resumen

En ese texto proponemos analizar los escritos del médico, antropólogo y psicoanalista alagoano Arthur Ramos (1903-1949) sobre la denominada “crianza problema”, formulados en el final de los años 1930, a partir de observaciones de expertos en algunas escuelas públicas del Distrito Federal, Rio de Janeiro, entre los años de 1934 y 1939, las llamadas Escuelas Experimentales. Nos detendremos al tipo de crianza rotulada por Ramos como ahuyentada, a la cual en el libro fue destinada 4 capítulos donde el autor explora como las condiciones del ambiente vital del niño son determinantes para su aprendizaje, sociabilidad, y condiciones para posibles desajustes o no. El objetivo del texto es remontar parte de la historia sociológica, educacional y psicológica sobre la visión de la niñez pobre en Brasil, y como esa interpretación conduzo una forma de sujeción sanitaria de aquellas crianzas, vistas como potenciales problemas a la nación, una vez que pobreza y desalojo estaban íntimamente relacionados.

Palabras-clave: Arthur Ramos; Crianza Problema; Escuela; Familia.

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Introduction

The book *The Problem Child* contains more than 400 pages, and is divided into 21 chapters entitled: Heritage and environment; The spoiled child; The driven child; Family constellations; The only son; Grandparents and other relatives; Turbulent child; Tics and rhythms; School escapes; Sexual problems; Fear and anguish; The lie; Theft, treatment and assistance.

In these chapters, the casuistry is taken from the “*Serviço de Higiene Mental*”, directed by the author. The explanations that follow the presentation of each case emphasize a comprehensive attitude towards the disorder presented and are based, especially, on the psychoanalytic theoretical scheme, although the author's extensive theoretical documentation about the subjects covered even in non-psychoanalytic domains is evident. (MOKREJS, 1987, p. 99).

Ramos pointed out that the ethnographic lesson showed that the way of treating children varies according to the conceptions of various peoples; in the 1920s and 1930s, childhood acquired centrality in the debate on nationality and social issues, in addition to becoming an object of interest for intellectuals. The intersections between psychoanalysis and education proposed by the author were created at a time of great intellectual effervescence regarding the role of psychiatry, psychoanalysis and education in the country modernization.

From the 1930s onwards, with the emergence of the New School movement and the public policies instituted by the Getúlio Vargas' governments, the importance of the State in protecting children grew. As Marta de Carvalho (1997) highlighted, support was sought in discourses legitimizing new, modern, experimental and scientific pedagogical knowledge. The “scientific study” of childhood understood as a methodical examination of all the child's energies: this would be an “optimistic bet on the child's nature and the child's educability” (CARVALHO, 1997, p. 279).

If the desire of the intellectuals' generation from 1930s was to see education as a “privileged resource in the process of building a new citizen profile suitable for a changing Brazil” (NEVES, 2002, p. 354), they will be responsible for endorsing the contribution from education to unified national consciousness, overcoming social contradictions; understood in this way, the school would present itself as an excellent laboratory of the social microcosm, not only for denouncing the complexity embedded in it, but also for presenting itself as a space for experimentation in proposing norms in line with the rationalist demands of the new society.

Ramos, in our hypothesis, by bringing all the interdisciplinary elements, contributed to a nascent agenda of research about children, and also to an agenda of new social processes involving actors in the educational field, mainly with regard to the relation between family and school, which would become a concern of sociological research about education between the 1950s and 1960s, which: “saw the family environment of origin, particularly its sociocultural dimension, as a powerful explanatory factor for inequalities in school opportunities among students”. (Nogueira, 2005, p. 564). In the conception of the medical anthropologist: “The children's problems can only be understood in the active world of their family and society circles” (Ramos, 1950, p. 10).

The proposal is understood from our perspective as an educational project forged from the moment when the school, in partnership with medical, psychiatric, psychological and socio-anthropological knowledge, sought to “correct” the problems presented by its students based on policies derived from of diverse interests, to resolve the main problems that affected childhood.

State investments in the processes of institutionalization and dissemination of school education in Brazil intensified in the first decades of the 20th century, and the articulation among health, education and childhood emerged as an issue of utmost importance to be projected into the national future; as a consequence, children become objects of intervention, and the school is responsible for preparing them for life in society. In this way, there was a concern for the consolidation of a type of appropriate childhood to the society that envisioned a modern and civilized future. Hence the specific care aimed at the materialization of a healthy child, which ranged from the mother's pregnancy, birth, aspects linked to nutrition, to forms of socialization, behavior and educational processes. In 1933, the Orthophrenia and Mental Hygiene Section (S.O.H.M) was created in Rio de Janeiro in the Department of Education of the Federal District, directed by Arthur Ramos between 1934 and 1939.

The work developed by Arthur Ramos at this institution allowed the emergence of a distinction still unknown in Brazilian education between children with emotional problems and those with intellectual disabilities, who in traditional pedagogy were treated and undifferentiated from as an abnormal child, whose reflexes also reverberated in the child psychiatry field. (ABRÃO, 2020, p. 16).

In his analyses, Ramos observed the need to invert the classic data of the so-called “abnormal” child. This definition encompassed the majority of children who, for various reasons, could not carry out their schooling duties, in parallel with their other companions, the “normal” ones. However, studies prove that only an insignificant percentage of these children would deserve, strictly speaking, the name “abnormal”, that is, those students who, due to “constitutional” defects, hereditary, or various causes that produced an imbalance of neuropsychological functions, could not be educated in the common school environment (RAMOS, 1950, p. 13).

The term “scholastic abnormal” was coined mainly by French pedagogy, and according to Ramos, its condition began within asylums, with the campaign to install special pavilions for “idiots”, generalizing the term. Just like primitive man, whose “savagery” was a creation of civilized people, also in children, the concept of “abnormal” was, first of all, the adult point of view, the consequence of an enormous unconscious sadism on the part of parents and educators (RAMOS, 1950, p. 17).

In this period from 1934 to 1939, the Orthophrenia and Mental Hygiene Service studied hundreds of cases. In the study, which was registered in “Service Record”, the teams used the “polygonal observation method” – incidental and systematic observation, qualitative descriptions, bibliographical narratives, questionnaires, objective measurements, mother's obstetric data, housing condition, anthropometric data, temperamental and characterological “facade” (MONARCHA, 2009, p. 281).

According to Xavier and Pinheiro (2016, p. 183), educators such as Anísio Teixeira defended scientific education associated with the adoption of active pedagogical methods, warning that the formation of rational attitudes, free from mystical thinking. The teachers at the Experimental Schools had the procedure of preparing weekly reports about the activities carried out. In a letter sent by Anísio Teixeira to Arthur Ramos, in 1939, he spares no praise for his collaborator, stating that S.O.H.M acted like a “thief in the middle of the night”, to carry out a true “essay of scientific moral education”.

The medical-psychiatrist language misses the strength of the hygienist ideas of the time, and the student's delay would constitute a deviation from a certain standard of learning speed, associated, in turn, with a supposed mental limitation. In the words of Arthur Ramos (1934):

Today, a dominant point of New School is the close collaboration between school and home. The school is no longer considered as carrying out a simple instructional activity, uninterested in the general educational aspect of the child. Today it is a center of great social activity, a center of coordination and discipline, where not only instructional subjects are learned, but life disciplines. It is called to intervene extensively in home life, guiding and educating (RAMOS, 1934, p. 388-9).

Arthur Ramos' generation of intellectuals, coming from the so-called *Nina Rodrigues* school, grouped research in the areas of legal medicine, psychology, anthropology, and racial issues. Luiz Duarte (1999) highlights that Ramos is one of the eminent characters in the "psychologization" of the Brazilian intellectual field, responsible for transposing this process to the level of interpretations of national collective life. Interest in ethnographic issues, such as "madness", "drugs" or "deviant sexuality", brings anthropologists closer to psychological knowledge, and makes them frequent interlocutors, including on issues of moral regulation.

The psychoanalysis read by Ramos (and his contemporaries) was fundamentally a theory of individual "civilization" or "education". Freudian theory was consumed mainly through the opposition between the more "primitive" "unconscious" and a consciousness capable of "educating" itself, controlling itself (eventually, self-control) through the very means of new "psychotherapeutic resources" made available to the civilization process. (DUARTE, p. 5, 1999).

According to Ramos, the Service would be responsible for advising parents about the following items in its program: 1. School and family; 2. The parental environment and the preschool child; 3. Housing and mental hygiene; 4. The child's life at home; 5. The psychological problem of the only child; 6. The beloved son and the hated son; 7. The beloved son and the hated son: casuistry; 8. Siblings and family conflicts; 9. Other relatives and their influence on the child's personality; 10. The mental formation of parents and educators (RAMOS, 1939, p. 4).

In this way, the school was seen as a major intervener in home life, guiding children's parents or guardians who had school adaptability conflicts, learning difficulties or behaviors considered inappropriate for the environment and its full functioning.

According to Ronaldo Garcia (2010), even though Ramos never called himself a pedagogue, it was undeniable that his works and proposals had an educational objective, as he saw the school as an institution capable of promoting changes in habits, of overcoming old taboos and to prepare physically and mentally healthy individuals, capable of advancing to higher levels of human and social development. Ramos and a generation of doctors were involved in the goals of renewing Brazilian society through teaching. They proposed to think about an education model that took into account the contributions of mental hygiene, psychiatry and psychoanalysis. In the author's words:

Thus, as Ramos himself confirmed, sociological and anthropological knowledge was essential for the work of the mental hygienist. Environmental influences referred to the family, but were not limited to it, they were also present in school, religion, work and other environments. However, it was in the family and, especially in childhood, where many of the problems that the subject faced in adult life were found. As a psychoanalyst, he seeks in the first phase of life the explanation for the neuroses, maladjustments and psychic conflicts that the subject experienced when he reached adulthood (GARCIA, 2010, p. 152).

The observations that we will mention here with the aim of analyzing the main causes attributed to poor childhood development highlight the reasons and details of their upbringing environments. The environmentalist perspective of the author and that a whole generation of professionals involved with the development and evolution of children in that period, brings as an element the human degradation of many families that generate the type of driven children, which is often motivated by promiscuity, aggravated by excessive use of alcohol by parents, also by uncontrolled sex, and violence.

Ramos did not deny the hereditary character of many human phenomena, both organically and psychologically, however according to Cátia Papadopoulos (2011), he did not defend the omnipotence of heredity but rather the influence of the environment, mainly family, in addition to the cultural, in the most general broad sense, involving the formation of the individual's personality. That's why he attributed the importance of studying children within their family constellations.

“The family environment as a whole was the main point of action for mental hygiene, but it should be noted that the mother was placed in a relevance position and responsibility in this child care” (PAPADOPOULOS, 2011, p. 116).

Families seen as maladjusted, unstructured or unconventional, were seen as an imposition for school failure, and perpetuating relations of poverty and human degradation. However, the school is presented as a possibility of correction, as it presented characteristics of neutrality and republicanism, in addition to being formed by a highly specialized technical body, and capable of forming an individual identified with the values considered healthy members of society. A moral and civic education should establish harmonious unity between family and school, both institutions conceived as two faces that derive from the same environment in which the child was inserted.

The connections between the main institutions where children circulated, the family and the school, whose primacy to adjust and prepare the child was of greater importance for the school environment, since through the observations of the specialized body, there were inconsistencies between school values and family values, the first considered modern and in accordance with the demands of the moment, and the second, often contaminated by the inhospitable and poor environment, experienced by maladjusted children.

Ramos' work can be read as a good thermometer for us to observe the constitution of childhood as an object and concern of different types of knowledge, and at the same time, bring the child as an object of intervention, in a context of widespread schooling in Brazil, illustrating the concern for the consolidation of a type of appropriate childhood to the society that was envisioned at the time, healthy, modern and civilized.

In order to present the argument, we divided the text as follows: in the first moment we observed the main republican movements in order to save childhood from the moral and physical abandonment to which many children were subjected, especially in recently urbanized regions, this was the moment in which that childhood begins to be seen as a necessary field of intervention for public policies and intellectuals. In the second, we will observe how Arthur Ramos establishes a direct interrelation between the poverty situation of families and the expulsion to which many children raised in non-conventional families would be subject. The special attention given to this type of child permeates their learning and sociability process, specific places where the school and family relations acquires centrality and the environmentalist perspective adopted establishes a direct symmetry between environment and personality disorders. Finally, we will address the role attributed to the female figure in relation to child care. Women were given a heavy burden in relation to childhood maladjustments, sometimes due to the absence of a maternal figure, sometimes because those who were in that position were considered unfit to carrying out their assigned functions through the watchful

eyes of men who had the diagnosis and solutions to face children's problems. On many occasions, women have caused harm to their children's mental health.

As we will see, from this paradigm of understanding childhood, it becomes necessary to care not only for the child's physical health, nutrition, physical well-being, but also for their psychological balance and personality.

The childhood's rise as a social problem

According to Irene Rizzini (2011), "The problem child" began to acquire a political dimension in the first two decades of the 20th century, embodied in what many called the "republican ideal", which attributed centrality to the child, who will become the great legitimizer of the disciplinary actions that are developed under the pretext of ensuring Brazil's progress.

"Thus, abandoned childhood, which lived between vagrancy and prowling, was treated, in the jurists' opinion, as a case of police, and of simple urban repression" (LONDÑO, 1995, p. 140). Corresponding to these transformations is the professionalization of child care that occurred throughout the 20th century, which led to the development of the area of social services, in order to reshape the issue of social assistance. Eduardo Nunes (2012) highlights that this new area of knowledge and action presented itself as capable of diagnosing society and establishing prescriptions, through social opinions, regarding what should be adopted in the "treatment" of children and family members. The new technique was ready to occupy its space in science, in public action, in the intimate lives of poor children and adolescents and their families.

This entire history led to the social construction of the "minor child"; as Cifali, Chies-Santos and Alvarez (2020) reflect, it was not a linear process, organized exclusively by the jurists of the time. Yes, it was a speech that presented children and teenagers on the streets of large urban centers as figures of disorder, which appeared at different times, both in political speeches and also in the press. "Forms of labeling and stigmatization of poor children, especially in large urban centers experiencing rapid growth at the time, also emerged, without a doubt, in everyday police practices" (CIFALI; CHIES-SANTOS; ALVAREZ, 2020, p. 200).

Marcos César Alvarez (2014) analyzes that, even though since the end of the 19th century there had been a discussion about the need for legislation and institutions aimed at children and adolescents, such debates ended up leading to the conformation of especially stigmatized laws and institutional practices that, for decades, they classified poor children and adolescents as "minors", that is, as potentially dangerous individuals prone to early delinquency.

From the first discussions held by doctors and jurists who perceived the situation of poor children and adolescents in large urban centers as both part of the "social issue" but above all as a problem of "social defense", to the discussions that culminated in the edition of the country's first Minors Code, promulgated in 1927, a whole process of "minorization" of this population sector was constituted, a process that ended up aggravating rather than solving the social problems it intended to address. (ALVAREZ, 2014, p. 113)

Poor children and their families became the object of countless government actions, leaving aside their moral and social isolation. As Jerry Dávila (2006) points out, Brazilian elites in the first half of the 20th century tended to believe that the poor and non-white people were, for the most part, degenerate, so schools were defined as clinics in which the national ills associated with the mixture race could be cured. These policies were imbued with medical and

social-scientific logic. Between 1917 and 1945, Rio de Janeiro was the largest city in Brazil and, as the federal capital, it attracted the energies of educational reformers across the nation.

It was in this way that attention to childhood as a social problem gained importance, and the perspective from that moment on moved from punitive practices to aspects of care and protection, assuming, therefore, that children should be protected by the State. The theoretical and scientific tools that nourished the formatting of public educational policies were based on an analysis about the child's holistic environment, which became the target of attention from teachers, educators in general, psychologists and doctors, in order to correct what the family, the institution of primary socialization, could have failed. Therefore, from the analysis of the home environment, we expected to find the reason why the child was seen as a problem in the school environment. In this sense, one of the fundamental elements that was in vogue at that time was the process of establishing the universalization of primary school, since it is within this institutional space that the child would be prepared for social life.

This Brazilian educational context of the 1930s was greatly influenced by the appreciation of institutionalized forms of child socialization, and the recognition of the school education function as a condition for a free and civilized country.

Marcus Vinícius da Cunha (2007) pointed out that New School movement differed from the old educational model, since then called “traditional”, based on the support of a set of knowledge and techniques allowed knowing individual particularities and objectively controlling the factors involved in the teaching and learning process. In the normalizing effort, the family was a privileged target, as it was known that nothing productive and lasting could be done with the child at school if there was no receptivity to pedagogical procedures in the home environment.

“The family, therefore, must fit in, or be framed, in the principles dictated by the renewing educational discourse” (CUNHA, 2007, p. 457).

By paying attention to the child's daily life, based on a multidimensional analysis, articulating micro and macrosocial elements, Ramos brought the theoretical framework of anthropology, psychology, sociology and history to the educational sphere:

Thinking and acting about official child care policies at the beginning of the century was the privilege of an elite made up of authorities, intellectuals, people from good society, uncomfortable with a situation that was beginning to constitute a problem that could get out of control, mainly from the State (RIZZINI, 2011, p. 280).

The school would be conceived as the public space for children to act, therefore, they transmit images of discipline and hierarchy. Ramos points out that the vast majority of cases of disobedience and indiscipline are children who are forced out of their homes, or morally abandoned, who develop feelings of inferiority as attempts to overcompensate. These children express their feelings of revenge and aggression at school, going against the rules of school discipline, revolting against authority, as a means of doubly taking revenge on the adults who chase them away, and of asserting their personality.

The mapping of children's difficulties when articulating and establishing themselves as a conformed, cohesive and harmonious school body, carried out by the professionals involved in the project of Orthophrenia and Mental Hygiene Section, created a list of recommendations and established a typology of children's problems, according to the division of the book's chapters: the spoiled child, the shunned child, the turbulent child, and the only son.

Despite the establishment of this generalizing typology, Laura Lima (2006) states that school education should meet the individual characteristics of students, but she also agreed that the ultimate objective of this investment would not be the student, but society.

Care policies linked mainly to the health and education pillars have redefined the perspective of childhood, since the child is inserted as a central element of family life, as it represents the future, which has caused changes in the organization of domestic life, including as an issue the parental love organization, the reorganization of the love and sex laws, and coexistence between adults and children in family life must be remedied.

The relation between poverty and expulsion

According to Roberto Franco Reis (2000), the Brazilian Mental Hygiene League (LBHM), an institution created in the early 1920s, brought together the elite of Brazilian psychiatry, doctors and other intellectuals, including Arthur Ramos. For this group, the child was seen as a “pre-citizen”, a “fundamental part of the man of the future”, the league's psychiatrists included children's issues in their projects, imperatively consolidating the need for care from an early age: “In effect, the child, given the heavy past racial heritage, represented the balm of a viable future” (p. 6).

In this sense, the mental hygiene movement also sought to contribute to the formation of a “mentally healthy” and “morally hygienic” nuclear and conjugal family conception, in the decades from 1920 to 1940, in Brazil. Moura and Boarini (2011) comment about some directions proposed by hygienists: instructing the population in relation to general health care; seek to ensure collective health; seek to develop care aimed at childcare, control of infectious and hereditary diseases; develop home care through visiting professionals; propose physical and mental care within the family.

In the booklet called *Family and School*, from the scientific dissemination collection of the Federal District City Hall, the objective of the Orthophrenia and Mental Hygiene Service – S.O.H.M –, created by Teixeira, in 1933, and headed by Arthur Ramos, from 1934 onwards is clear:

True mental hygiene work aims to prevent the outbreak of mental deviations in children with character defects, to preserve and guide the normal child and to correct the maladjusted child. By preventing and providing guidance, however, mental hygiene goes beyond the scope of schools and widely penetrates homes and social life. It is a real shift in its axis of action - from the problem of treatment to that of prevention and guidance. (RAMOS, 1934, p. 7)

In the analyzed work by Arthur Ramos, the typology of students established was based on the analysis of orthophrenic records (around 2,000 records) of students assisted by the Orthophrenia and Mental Hygiene Section, which arise in a specific social environment: Brazilian society at the time, which sought to outline a change in the structures of a child's personality, towards self-control and discipline, based on family relations, ways of raising children, housing, the body, health, illness and life in general.

Ricardo Andrade (1994) highlights that the penetration of psychoanalysis in Brazil was thanks to an alliance between psychiatry and the State, aiming to develop a preventive public hygiene project in urban centers, including orphans of the Empire: the recently freed slaves, indigenous people, poor white people and immigrants.

“Since the beginning of the 20th century and particularly in the 1930s, Brazilian Psychiatry has given great importance to the incidence and prevalence of different types of mental illness and their ethnic distribution” (COSTA, 1976, p. 111).

The records were the result of observations, coding and judgments made by visitors, teachers, doctors and psychologists who inferred about these children. There are

records in which the student's speech appears, but the writing is not theirs; they dealt with a list of themes that permeated the students' lives, such as: "sex" of the person being investigated, ethnicity, characterization of the father and mother (nationality, profession and health status), number and age of siblings, place of residence (quality of the house), if there was an "abnormality" in the mother's obstetric history, his/her diet, sleep and wake times, whether he/she plays or not, behavior at school, weight and height, and if any sign of illness is present in the organic examination. Therefore, we can observe an analysis that favors the children's chronological succession stages, as if they all followed the same developmental sequence.

According to Silveira's (2019) analysis, Ramos understood the Form as a "general examination" that should be in-depth by a body of professionals with technical and specialized training. The author sought to access information about school indiscipline during the 1930s, in Rio de Janeiro, from the perspective of school culture, interrogating the ways in which children undertook the attitudes that led them to view them as a problem for schools or furthermore, as a problem for the entire society:

the child and his behavior began to be understood more from the perspective of the influence of maladjustments in the social and family environment and less from a biological deterministic understanding, which would guarantee that many of the children considered "abnormal" and thus, away from school life in common schools, could be thought of from the perspective of recovery. The development of this process from S.O.H.M was marked, however, by the presence of other fields of knowledge in which Ramos was involved, especially Psychoanalysis and Anthropology (SILVEIRA, 2019, p. 123).

This examination and recording of the individual characteristics of children in their relations with medical institutionalization within schools helped in the process of classifying these children, and at the same time, attempted to cover the "totality" of the human organism (Mokrejs, 1987, p. 102). This kind of medical, psychic and pedagogical dossier of all the elements surrounding children aimed to reduce their academic and social failures, which meant a benefit for the whole of society in the future.

Carlos Monarcha (2009) highlights that the psychoanalytic tool could intervene in education, as give his/her ego to civilization. The scientific view tended to perceive childhood from the angle of negative causality: impulses, instincts, repressions, complexes, renunciations, derivations, fixations, phenomena that, according to professionals, conspired against the emergence of the mature and rational person.

The urgency of carrying out psychotherapy with a view to the formation of an abnormal "self" can be adequately socialized and authentically individualized, hence the impetus to transport the progress of science to school and home and provide correct mental formation in students, teachers and parents. "The modern school mental hygienist must avoid rigid classifications that aim to give 'labels' to maladjusted children" (RAMOS, 1950, p. 21).

Ramos also points out that we do not need to insist on the purely organic causes of many school performance deficits. Mental Hygiene clinics must provide organic medical treatment of all defects and illnesses found, in addition to nutritional and hygienic assistance, in close collaboration with medical, clinical, dental bodies and the school.

If the problem student is the result of several inappropriate factors in his/her family and school environment, it would be with the analysis and clarification of these factors that we readjust the situation. Ramos therefore tried to understand, based on what was

absent in the child's personality, this adaptability to school precepts, thus establishing a behavioral pattern considered modern at that historical moment.

Ramos (p. 40) pointed out that man is a product of his civilization and society. This study is a specific object of sociology and cultural anthropology, sciences for which mental hygiene required invaluable assistance. There were “deforming conditions” present in the social and cultural environment, which were adverse to the health of the spirit, and in the case of “problem children”, these adversities entered the school environment, hence the need to understand what the causes were of maladjustment and the learning inabilities of these children.

The objective of the Orthophrenia and Mental Hygiene Section was to help public school students seen as “incapable of learning”, for which they were subjected to a series of medical and psychological assessments, so that the results of accurate diagnoses about behaviors helped in the process of intellectual development and adjustment to social institutions.

Ramos, in *The problem child*, reinforced the need for close collaboration between school and home, until then the role of housing in the child's development was being studied by hygienists only from the point of view of general hygiene. From a psychological point of view, this factor was not taken into consideration by educators and orthophrenic professionals, but reading the children's curriculum vitae shows the powerful influences of maladjusted environments, domestic conflicts, emotional drain, bad role models to imitate, fatigue in due to malnutrition and work, all of which lead to poor or no performance at school, in addition to personality and conduct problems.

According to Ana Laura Godinho Lima (2004), most problem children were identified among populations at higher risk, either because they were very poor, or because they lived in “unstructured” families in which the father was absent or the mother worked outside the home, or were generated by single women in adolescence. The vast majority of expelled children come from dysfunctional homes, from economically poor backgrounds. Pauperism brings with it multiple conditions of maladjustment: malnutrition, alcoholism, illness and antisocial reactions. Pauperism leads to other unfavorable conditions in the home, maladjustments of all sorts that will harm the child's mental formation. Vagrancy, school abandonment and truancy among children are, in the vast majority of cases, the consequence of their parents' moral abandonment; they are homeless children who throw themselves into life.

As it can be seen through the students' observation records, there is a shift in focus from genetic inheritance to the environment in which the maladjusted student is inserted. Even though ethnic belonging to hetero identification by observers is always present, that is, the descriptions on the records begin with the description of the student's gender and color. Furthermore, from the students' observation sheets, it is possible to notice how the interpretations about poverty and maladjustment would be interconnected, as shown in the two examples below.

Note 37 (School “*Estados Unidos*”, record no. 42 of the S.O.H.M.). O. G., 12 year old boy, white. The father, Brazilian, construction worker, frequently gets drunk, becomes choleric on these occasions, and beats his children for any reason. The mother, a Brazilian, washerwoman, also treats her children very harshly, beating them. 6 brothers, two girls aged 1 to 10, and four boys, aged 3, 5, 13 and 14. Says the boy the mother's parents were Indians. [...]. They live in a rented house, collective housing; There is no accommodation for the child, who sleeps in the same room as the entire family. The boy works a lot at home, carrying weights on his head. Nothing can be ascertained about

the boy's maternal obstetric history and early childhood. Undernutrition. He goes to bed at 10pm, gets up at 4am (?): he sleeps with two brothers in the same bed. He gets up at dawn, goes to the market to make carts, to earn money and give it to his mother; tidies the house, cleans the dishes, makes breakfast, waxes houses. He doesn't play at home, because he doesn't have time and his mother won't let him. At school he plays with companions, with a tendency to dominate. (RAMOS, 1950, p. 112).

Through this detailed observation, we noticed that it is a large family, with children of different ages, there is a description of indigenous racial heritage, housing is not personal, in addition to being collective, without the guarantee of intimacy from the couple. The boy is inserted into the child labor world, is undernourished and rigorously raised. The mother works to ensure the family's livelihood, and the father also works as a manual worker, and is frequently drunk.

By reading the sheets, which introduce us to the universe of the child's most intimate family relations, we can see an intensification of the debate surrounding the relations among culture, the environment and the child's psychological development, in search of the reasons for their school maladjustment. Therefore, the topic of extra-school socialization, specifically within the family, was an essential topic for the successful mental hygiene of students with problems.

The public (school) and private (family) spheres would be intimately connected here. This gains centrality because it would be responsible for the transmission of a cultural, racial and social heritage, which can be decisive in students' school trajectories and conduct. It is worth highlighting that this health awareness was part of the agenda of several projects implemented under the heading of health education. About the subject, warns Marília Marques (2000, p.35), that it was from the end of the 1910s, especially after the First World War, that conditions were created for health education to become a public health specialty. It proposed promoting health education, establishing prevention as a central component of action programs.

Individual interaction with families, through a body of professionals, involving educators, psychologists, teachers, aimed to define, among others, which affective relations were being consolidated or not within the home, which could be beneficial or harmful to children. Therefore, the intermediation of these professionals was extremely important for the effective and full functioning of the schooling process.

Ramos added the characterization of the home's maladjustment, the question of the child's legitimacy, which according to him, constitutes a problem with the issue of non-consanguineous child:

In the series of maladjustments at home, the problem of the illegitimate child looms large. Unfortunately, this constitutes the majority of cases of poor homes observed by our Service, of children in the hills, born in poor economic conditions. Many of these problems are confused with the general problems of parental maladjustment, with corporal punishment of children, scolding, interdictions, moral abandonment... Sometimes, however, the problem arises from the condition of illegitimacy itself, leading to conflicts between parents and siblings. (RAMOS, 1950, p.114).

As noted below, the case of maladjustment arises, in addition to other factors, from the child's insertion into an unconventional family structure:

Note 40 (*“General Trompowski”* School, record no. 37 of the S.O.H.M). N. M., 12-year-old boy, black. The father, Brazilian, military, suffered from his heart; alcoholic and smoker, died of alcohol poisoning two years ago; he punished his son a lot with blows. The mother, Brazilian, cook, lives miserably (she doesn't get paid, because she wasn't married). 4 sisters, three girls and a boy. The paternal grandmother lives with the family; she does not esteem the child; punishes her a lot. Everyone, please, live in a house in a Fort; they live on handouts from charitable associations. He goes to entertainment, sometimes paid for by the Fort's soldiers. [...]. Difficulty in the boy's development; stuttering. Undernutrition. Go to bed at 9 o'clock; sleeps in the same bed with his mother and sister. He sometimes plays in the Fort, with the soldiers. At school, he plays with his companions, tending to dominate. He torments his colleagues, is a braggart, chatters, lies and steals. He bites his nails. He is agitated, aggressive, noisy, imaginative, with alternatives of goodness and perversity. Poor attention, good memory, regular learning. He weighs 31 kilos and 50 and is 1m35 tall. Bad body cleaning habits. Nothing abnormal in his organic exam. [...]. 1937 – there are suspicions of theft. (RAMOS, 1950, p. 114-15).

Again in this family typology we have the ethnic description, the parents' professional activities, the number of children the couple has, and in the latter case the absence of the father's figure, now dead, as a result of the use of alcohol and tobacco. The details about the father's addiction, the mother's poverty and the punishments the child receives from his grandmother, appear as conditions for his development, which, according to the description, was not complete, as the boy stuttered and was undernourished. In addition to the moral details of his personality: tendency to dominate, talkative, “swashbuckler”, liar and stealer (highlighted twice in the description).

This theme of adapting the home to the child was in vogue at that time and context of publication of texts aimed at the child's early development. Urbanity and the national State called for new family habits, it is no surprise that observations pay attention to the size of the houses, their architecture, whether or not they were their own. Unhealthy environments often led to criminal acts, the absence of a provider father and a caring mother, the precariousness of parental and marital ties, were seen as elements of unhealthy conditions for these children.

“The idea of the harmfulness of the family environment can be taken as the great medical trump card in the fight for the educational hegemony of children” (COSTA, 2004, p.171).

As Martha Abreu (2000) pointed out, the great task of mental hygiene would therefore be to study the social and cultural factors that condition human behavior, especially that of children. To this end, it locates social evils in pauperism, social toxicities, maladjustment, disease, and, mainly, housing.

If the centrality placed on the maladjustments of the social environment replaced the racial issue, from the 1930s onwards, new ambiguities and prejudices surrounding poverty began to surround the views about “problem children”, generally poor and black; black and poor (ABREU, 2000, p. 137).

The child's goal should be to become an adult free from problems and traumas experienced in childhood, to this end it would be necessary to develop an integrated plan in administrative terms, pedagogical practices, human resources, psychopedagogical programming, multidimensional elements of utmost importance for understanding the network of interdependence in which the child is inserted. The sanitary perspective remained and reached tragic levels.

The attention focused on the “shunned” child, combined with the importance given to the family constellation, the idea of “problem parents” and the stereotypical view of family relations in the poor classes – “on the one hand the spoiled, overprotected child, on the other the child from the hill, the slum, the shack in a promiscuous life” he dichotomized – led him to report, in the four chapters of “excoriation”, consecutive cases in which maladjustments of families belonging to the popular classes were blamed for low school performance (PATTO, 2015, p.105).

School education, due to its privileged place in Brazilian society at the beginning of the 20th century, should therefore aim to link children to their homeland, so that they feel integrated into it and grow up in a balanced and healthy environment. “The school, in strong nations, is the workshop of nationality. It is there that the temper of actions of the people that lead civilization is forged.” (GONDRA, 2005, p. 528).

The professionalization of child care that occurred throughout the 20th century led to the development of the area of social services, which redefined the issue of social assistance. For Eduardo Nunes (2012), this new area of knowledge and action presented itself as capable of diagnosing society and prescribing, through social opinions, that should be adopted in the “treatment” of children and family members. The new technique was ready to occupy its space in science, in public action, in the intimate lives of poor children and adolescents and their families.

Although the records symbolize the effect of the various records of many agents who made up the teams involved in the process of institutionalizing children in the school context, the book *The problem child* is the result of Arthur Ramos' narrative choices, therefore, the family tradition was formatted by the male glance, whose model of a healthy family, implicitly seen as a ruler, it would be one made up of the responsible and dedicated mother to the home and children, the father exercising his work functions and free from vices, residing in a house with space for the children to develop, clean and organized. This model would not generate the result of maladjusted children, and became a kind of archetype of domestic success in the hygienic expression present in the book.

The mothers' and women's role in children's mental health:

According to Heloísa Rocha Pimenta (2009), the female figure represents an important chapter in the topic of school hygiene, as among other functions, women marked the formation of a generation that would be the future of the nation. Due to the lack of qualified nurses, until approximately the 1940s, health authorities invested in the training of health educators or visitors.

Mothers, guided by educators, visitors and doctors, would be responsible for taking care of the home and children, including desirable practices of personal cleanliness and clothing, home hygiene and food. In this sense, there is also a need to educate these mothers, creating discipline and commitment to the nation they envision. Ana Paula Martins (2008) emphasizes that homes are like laboratories, which measure, calculate, weigh and write down doubts to be

resolved by medical knowledge. The mother model is the educated, well-informed woman, open to the new rules of childcare and obedient to her child's pediatrician.

“It was to consolidate this bond – naturalized and romanticized – that pediatric obstetricians wrote and worked so hard to transform women into devoted mothers, obedient disciples and grateful readers” (MARTINS, 2008, p. 153).

In the book, Ramos (1950) further specifies the relationships established in homes where there is the absence of a father figure. “The orphaned, abandoned child, and the adopted child who feels stranded at home, present, in addition to problems of aggression, compensatory phenomena in theft and lies.” (p. 137).

It is interesting to note that a man's methodical and objective view of maternal care brought a series of stereotypes that tried to consolidate different images of the mother - even if she no longer participated in the child's life - sometimes devout, rigid, hard-working, dedicated, sometimes perverted, absent and sloppy. As the following two cases reveal:

Note 41 (“*Manuel Bomfim*” School, record no. 134 of the S.O.H.M.). M.L., 8-year-old girl, light brown. Father unknown. Her mother, Brazilian, black, was seduced at the age of 9 by the head of the house where she lived and her bad life began early on. She gave her daughter to a couple she had met by chance outside a church. The couple named the girl and took care of her from the age of three. The girl lives with her godmother, who is married to a lawyer, and has 4 children. They live in their own house, in the center of the property, with good appearance, with accommodation for the girl. The child occupies the room that belonged to the couple's niece. There is no information about maternal obstetric history. She plays with dolls, but the toys don't belong to her; They are from T... one of the couple's daughters. At school, she likes fidget toys. She is disobedient, tends to dominate, torments her colleagues, cries easily, is chatty, irritable, lies, eats sugar in secret. She is agitated, aggressive, suspicious, noisy. She weighs 24 kilos and is 1m20 tall. The organic examination revealed stigmata of congenital Lues, hypertrophy of the tonsils. From her observation record, by the Service assistant: March 1948 – Because she has short, curly hair, her colleagues call her “man”. L... cries so she complains to the teachers. Restless, she talks very loudly and screams in the room. She works little. She cries for any reason. She gets angry sometimes and doesn't respond to the teachers (RAMOS, 1950, p. 115).

Regarding the girl's and family history, we highlight that her mother possibly had an early pregnancy, and she had a “bad life”, probably, based on a moralizing sense of the term dedicated herself to prostitution. It is interesting to note that the adoptive father's profession was mentioned, he is a lawyer, who can provide very well for the house, which is his own, it has good conditions, including accommodation for the girl. The toys detail also draws attention, because although she has access to them, they do not belong to her. M.L's behavior highlighted in the observation is strongly influenced by the fact that she is an adopted daughter, and in a direct way, the narrative attributes the characteristics of her maladjusted behavior to her previous history.

In the case below, it is observed that the other child was experiencing significant improvements due to being in an adoptive family made up of a father and mother, and living in a good house:

Note 60 (“*Bárbara Ottoni*” School, S.O.H.M record no. 234), I.S., 8-year-old girl, brown. Daughter of ignored parents. It is said that her mother died crazy, after a wild life. She was adopted by a lady, who provided the information contained in this form. Three family members and two employees live in the house. They live in their own house, which looks good. The girl goes to bed at 9pm, gets up at 7am; it takes her a while to fall asleep; she sleeps alone in bed. She lies a lot, steals sometimes (at home). She weighs 28 kilos and 500 grams and is 1m29 tall. Organic examination revealed congenital Lues. From her observation record: 3/14/1936 – Tutor I told us... that two years ago she took the child to educate. Her father was ignored and her mother, living off the harlot, died insane, leaving the girl left with a bad life companion. When she received her, she was a thin, dirty girl, used the worst language, lied and stole sweets. A year later, desperate to correct her, she handed her over to the Juvenile Judge but soon after, her 16-year-old daughter, suffering from the poor conditions in which she found I... asked her mother to take the girl back. A year ago, she returned to her company, and has shown significant improvements. At first, when reprimanded, she would tremble and urinate all over herself. To this day, the girl steals fruit, hiding the peels in her drawer. She breaks a lot of household objects, fights with the maids. However, she has shown affection to the couple's daughter, and has gradually improved. (RAMOS, 1950, p. 136).

The child's biological mother would have died crazy, as a result of an unruly life, and her father was an ignored figure. However, in this observation there is a highlighted difference, which is the significant improvements that the girl had been going through, among which is the demonstration of affection to the couple who adopted her, which suggests that being raised in a conventional family structure, with good financial conditions made a difference to her destiny.

The main focus of the observations was to highlight the presence of some obstacles to be overcome so that the child could live under conditions considered dignified, which would provide their well-being and adaptability to the school environment. However, even though Ramos had overcome interpretations of a biologizing nature and the term abnormal, some of the author's observations and analyzes still articulate the issue of race and family models considered “alternative” as one of the main causes of certain childhood disorders.

When indicating the mother's role as privileged in maintaining the child's psychological stability, the majority of children from single-parent, adoptive or simply foster families experienced disturbances. In this sense, there would be a kind of consensus regarding the precariousness of the moral and health situation of families and child maladjustment.

Women symbolized the first references for the organization of the home, therefore, they should be at home, taking care of the domestic space and their offspring. That is why special guidelines for mothers were common, based on discipline and health habits. Furthermore, there is an obligation for the child to be institutionalized at school, according to this model designed based on health care, and in the family, as long as this also maintains characteristics considered healthy, through its conventionality.

In this way, Arthur Ramos made use of a range of precepts, such as hygiene, preventive medicine, social and psychological assistance services, analysis of the child's family and school insertion, their pedagogical skills, social conditions, etc., thus outlining

a trend of holistic and interventionist analysis about the child subject, which is why their concerns present a broad interdisciplinary debate, beyond the school environment.

It is observed that there is a great investment in the vital interventions of these children, the supposed predisposition for educability would lead to the homogenization of the public school, in this horizon, racial criteria, not always explicit, outlined the limits of the republican “good intentions” of bringing education to all, universally, “[...] operating the distinction among educable populations, therefore capable of citizenship, and populations in which the weight of heredity (read, above all, race) was the mark of a destiny in which education was unable to change.” (CARVALHO, 1997, p. 299).

In this sense, the clinics installed in Rio de Janeiro, according to Ramos (1950), were an innovative experience for the country, and were responsible for the extensive development of an action program. The first mental hygiene clinics were staffed by technicians distributed across four divisions or special sectors, social (social services, teachers, visitors), psychological (psychological examination of mental background and pedagogical skills), medical (organic background examination) and psychiatric (more extensive examination of all emotional and psychological maladjustments from borderline cases, up to the most severe aspects of neurosis and psychosis).

Ramos also concluded from studies of family constellations that other characters in homes should also be investigated: grandparents, uncles, godparents, housekeepers and other people in the family environment, who exerted influence on the child. Furthermore, he mentioned the great importance for the mental hygiene of wet nurses.

In some cases, mentioned in his analysis, he noticed that when these connections were close, great binomials were formed: the nurses called the children “my children”, deriving their maternal desires from them, and a series of maladjustments could be established in the family scale. Frequent cases are jealousy on the part of parents, due to the “rights” that the nanny believes she has, defenses that she makes of her pupil, in front of her parents and siblings, creating conflicts:

The child can develop with an intense connection to his servant, as in the case of these family nurses, typical in patriarchal organization. It is often the image of the nanny that stands out in the forefront of childhood memories, with the image of the mother being very dim or relegated to secondary importance. (RAMOS, 1950, p. 214).

Mariza Corrêa (2007) points out that in a country with colonial conditions and culture, the nanny was often linked to childhood perversions, stigmatized for possibly transmitting diseases and bad habits, as her poverty came with the danger of outsiders for families, but despite this, she was the substitute and emergency caregiver. In this case, the asymmetrical conception of relations between biological mothers and nannies stands out, as the priority to exercise the maternal role would be that of the biological mother.

The author mentions Gilberto Freyre, when analyzing the relations between *Casa-Grande and Senzala*, repeatedly stated that it was in intimate relation with black mothers that the attraction of white people developed. For the establishment of mental hygiene, according to Ramos' recommendations, the care and education of children symbolized the introduction of modern habits, and nannies, wet nurses and domestic workers in general began to be seen as a legacy of a past that should have been overcome. In this item, it is also noted that popular practices of medicine, care and nutrition are devalued in the name of the institutional procedure and objective of science.

The way of raising, educating and institutionalizing children underwent a critical review in Arthur Ramos' proposal in the work *The problem child*, through the empirical examination

of many cases of “maladjustments”, as he himself highlighted, the individual should be adjusted to their successive life cycles, and in line with the balance that mental hygiene prescriptions indicated as correct. In this way, a change in the personality structures of individuals was outlined, towards disciplined self-control.

Final considerations

The health and moral guidelines offered by various professionals who worked in the Orthophrenia and Mental Hygiene Service were intended to standardize the attitudes of the private (home and family) and public (school) lives of children and families who presented problems linked to learning and behavior. The school should create organic relations with the home, since the domestic environment was indispensable for revealing the subjectivity and personality of the problem child. In this sense, the combination of sociological, psychological and pedagogical aspects was of fundamental importance for the educational Ramos' project, characterized by the construction of a social being fully identified with modern societal values.

As we have seen, Ramos' book can be read as a valuable document about the socialization forms among children and their colleagues, families and agents of the school organization. All these social relations would be under the tutelage of psychoanalysis and medical knowledge. This proposed modern type of education suggested the intensification of maternal and paternal filial bonds, the cultivation of emotional intimacy, attentive to the physical and psychological signs of children and the attentive observation of professionals from different areas of knowledge in processes linked to children's hygiene and mental health. Arthur Ramos' book emphasized statistical data, participant research, observation and diagnosis of the school environment with regard to dropout, failure, absences and “abnormal” behaviors.

We have an important report of a rational consciousness in schooled society, whose multidimensional action is capable of diagnosing, preventing and curing certain mental and intellectual maladjustments, thus children would be shielded and protected by medical science.

The program built by Ramos directed the focus to the school context and the psychic processes triggered there, such processes entered as a structural variable in the explanation of school inequalities, however, it did not deny the influence of extra-school factors, such as the students' social origin. Therefore, the research used quantitative and qualitative data, since children's behavior should be closely monitored by the family, teachers, psychologists and doctors; this procedure, to some extent, established the expectations that experts had regarding the future.

In this way, the author summarizes that the myth of the “happy age”, located in childhood, had already been destroyed, when the adult remembers his childhood days, he often finds in the “distant folds” of his impressions a vast world of fears, of martyrdom and anguish. Mental hygiene, according to his argument, is a practical science that has just begun, but this practice would never have been as important as in these troubled days of a civilization in violent transition that has not yet found its way.

The situation experienced by Arthur Ramos favored changes in pedagogical institutions as responses to national historical challenges, above all, his concerns about the repercussions of “maladjusted” environments on children's psyches. This explanatory model that adopted new work scales, extending its field of observation to micro-units of analysis, such as the classroom, the school structure, the dietary needs and health condition of each student, school agents and the student's family, pointed to the perspective that school operations are neither innocuous nor neutral, they can be decisive in the weight of these children's destinies. In this way, there is an understanding of the meaning of education, which is not restricted to the private environment of the home. By valuing this stage of life, perceived as a privileged period to institutionalize

this individual, it established the future commitments of these children with the nation, defining their identities and configuring their participation in a common destiny.

The author entered everyday school life and, simultaneously, supplanted this space in a period in which the Sociology of Education itself, whose analytical space was basically based on macrostructure analyses, was not formulated as a field of academic knowledge.

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