

## ARTICLE

**OF WHAT CRISIS ARE WE TALKING ABOUT IN CONTEMPORARY ADOLESCENCE?  
SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON PSYCHOANALYSIS AND EDUCATION**JULIA M. B. ANACLETO<sup>1</sup>ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2969-5286>PAULA FONTANA FONSECA<sup>2</sup>ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4887-3148>

**ABSTRACT:** Tributary of contemporary discursivity, adolescence can be understood as the effect of a political and social production that demarcates a difference with childhood. Resorting to the Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalytic framework, this paper presents a theoretical debate around the theme of the crisis of adolescence from the perspective of psychoanalytic studies in the field of education. To do so, it highlights the change of position in relation to the sexual as a mark of the transition through which the adolescent goes through, with consequences in the social bond. We demonstrate that the critical character of the adolescent experience is not restricted to biological and individual alterations; rather, it concerns how this structuring experience of the psychic constitution is signified by contemporary social discourse, often leading to impasses and psychic suffering. Displacing the question of adolescence from an individual scope and as a simple consequence of a phase of life determined by organic changes, we point out that the notion of crisis unveils something that concerns educating in the modern world and the consequences of techno-scientificism as a response that obliterates the responsibility of adults in addressing the word to adolescents, which engenders a new form of justificationism: techno-scientificism. Within this scenario, it interests us to highlight that the adolescent wandering in search of new subjective meanings can find in the school territory a space to be experienced without, hastily, being captured in a closed and often excluding sense. The Freudian idea of impossibility proper to the act of educating points to an ethical position in face of the challenge of modernity in what is at stake in the school experience.

**Keywords:** psychoanalysis; adolescence; education; crisis.

**DE QUE CRISE SE TRATA NA ADOLESCÊNCIA CONTEMPORÂNEA? ALGUMAS CONSIDERAÇÕES  
PSICANALÍTICAS E EDUCACIONAIS**

**RESUMO:** Tributária da discursividade contemporânea, a adolescência pode ser entendida como efeito de uma produção política e social que demarca uma diferença com o infantil. Recorrendo ao arcabouço psicanalítico freudo-laciano, o presente artigo apresenta um debate teórico em torno do tema da crise da adolescência a partir da perspectiva dos estudos psicanalíticos no campo da educação. Para tanto, destaca a mudança de posição frente ao sexual como uma marca da transição pela qual passa o adolescente com consequências no laço social. Demonstramos que o caráter crítico da experiência adolescente não se restringe a alterações biológicas e individuais; antes, diz respeito a como essa experiência estruturante

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da constituição psíquica é significada pelo discurso social contemporâneo, levando muitas vezes a impasses e sofrimentos psíquicos. Deslocando a questão da adolescência de um âmbito individual e como simples consequência de uma fase da vida determinada por mudanças orgânicas, apontamos que a noção de crise desvela algo que diz respeito ao educar no mundo moderno e às consequências do tecnocientificismo como uma resposta que oblitera a responsabilidade dos adultos no endereçamento da palavra aos adolescentes, o que engendra uma nova forma de justificacionismo: o tecnocientificismo. Dentro deste cenário, interessa-nos destacar que a errância adolescente em busca de novas significações subjetivas pode encontrar no território escolar um espaço para ser experimentada sem que, apressadamente, seja capturada em um sentido fechado e frequentemente excludente. A ideia freudiana da impossibilidade própria ao ato de educar aponta para uma posição ética em face do desafio da modernidade no que diz ao que está em causa na experiência escolar.

**Palavras-chave:** psicanálise; adolescência; educação; crise.

### **¿DE CUAL CRISIS SE TRATA EN LA ADOLESCENCIA CONTEMPORÁNEA? ALGUNAS CONSIDERACIONES PSICOANALÍTICAS Y EDUCACIONALES**

**RESÚMEN:** Heredera al discurso contemporáneo, la adolescencia puede entenderse como efecto de una producción política y social que establece una diferencia con la niñez. Utilizando el marco psicoanalítico freudo-lacaniano, este artículo presenta un debate teórico sobre el tema de la crisis adolescente desde la perspectiva de los estudios psicoanalíticos en el campo de la educación. Por lo tanto, destaca el cambio de posición en relación con lo sexual como una indicación de la transición que atraviesa el adolescente con consecuencias en el lazo social. Demostramos que el carácter crítico de la experiencia adolescente no está restringido a cambios biológicos e individuales; más bien, se refiere a cómo esta experiencia estructurante de la constitución psíquica está representada por el discurso social contemporáneo, que a menudo conduce a impases y sufrimientos psíquicos. Desplazando la cuestión de la adolescencia desde un contexto individual y como una simple consecuencia de una fase de la vida determinada por cambios orgánicos, señalamos que la noción de crisis desvela algo que concierne al educar en el mundo moderno y a las consecuencias del tecnocientificismo como una respuesta que oblitera la responsabilidad de los adultos al dirigir la palabra a los adolescentes. Dentro de este escenario, destacamos que la errancia de los adolescentes en su búsqueda por nuevas significaciones subjetivas puede encontrar en el territorio escolar un espacio para ser experimentada sin ser capturada rápidamente en un sentido cerrado y, a menudo, excluyente. La idea freudiana de lo imposible, propia del acto de educar, señala una posición ética frente al desafío que implica la experiencia escolar.

**Palabras clave:** psicoanálisis; adolescencia; educación; crisis.

## INTRODUCTION

The idea of adolescence is a tributary of contemporary discursiveness, that is, it is the effect of a political and social production that demarcates a difference with childhood. Much is said about adolescence as a time of crisis, especially regarding the relationships with adults, whether in the family, school, or other institutional spaces. But would this crisis of adolescence be something inherent to a phase of life? What are the issues present in the idea of an adolescence crisis? How does this concern school in particular?

Throughout this article we will try to sustain that, beyond the subjective impasses that may appear in each one facing the challenge of adolescence, its apprehension as being of the order of a crisis concerns the social bond. Resorting to the Freud-Lacanian psychoanalytic framework, it is possible to state that adolescence is presented as referring to the change of position in relation to the sexual and, therefore, also to the position in the discourse (Alberti, 2009). This implies that the critical character of this experience is not restricted to biological and individual changes; rather, it concerns how this structuring experience of the psychic constitution is signified by contemporary social discourse, often leading to impasses and psychic suffering.

If, on the one hand, adolescence confronts the subject with the unveiling of the deceptive character of the childhood promise of completeness, on the other hand, we witness the refusal of the social discourse to recognize the illusory character of such promise (Alberti, 2009). It would follow that adolescence is seen both as a social ideal nurtured by the belief in the junction between a supposedly childlike nature and an adult body, and as its opposite, in the figure of the “problematic” adolescent as one who does not correspond to the imposed imaginary ideal (Pereira and Gurski, 2014).

The two only apparently antagonistic views that coexist in the current time respond to the attempt to reject the structural lack as the engine of modern subjectivity that only by this way can be marked by indeterminacy. Modernity itself is presented as tensioned between the opening of the future to indetermination thanks to the decline of the power of divine providence and the emergence of a new determinism given by techno-scientific discourse (Lefort, 1979/1999). The current prevalence of the logic of performance, consistent with the conduction of technical progress to its ultimate consequences, has intensified the crisis that does not concern a supposed “in itself” of adolescence, but the task of educating and its necessary reference to the past as a beacon for the construction of a future open to the new (Arendt, 1957/2005).

Finally, we will bring some considerations about the school experience of young people and the capital role of the school nowadays within this scenario, as it participates in the social discourse and participates in the stigmatization and pathologization of the adolescent, as well as it holds an enormous potential to exercise the symbolizing function (Duschatzky, 2008) necessary for adolescence to be the crossing that leads the subject to a saying of his own, elaboration of his place in the world and of his inscription in a tradition. The sustaining of such a social role of the school institution does not depend fundamentally on pedagogical theories or teaching methods. It is, rather, linked to an ethical challenge to which psychoanalytical studies in education intend to contribute in their own way.

## THE TWO TIMES OF SEXUALITY

Freud, in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905/1996), dedicated the third study to the theme of pubertal transformations. The text, originally published in 1905, suffered successive revisions and additions, which allows us to qualify it as an “open work”, in which “different theses on the sexual drive - often contradictory to each other - are presented” (Amaral, 1995, p.64). Amaral carries out a detailed analysis comparing the original version with the successive revisions and points out a rupture between the first two essays - which deal with sexual aberrations and infantile sexuality - and the one dedicated to puberty. According to the author, the latter is imbued with an evolutionary finalism that will be successively incorporated into the work as a whole. The polymorphous perverse character of sexuality, pregnant in the work of 1905, gives way to a notion of well-defined organization, divided into stages - oral, anal and genital. This study not only highlights the complexity of Freudian thought, but also

some of its contradictions, which enabled a diversity of readings on the theme of adolescence in the psychoanalytic field.

The Freudian choice for the term puberty calls attention. Would Freud be privileging the maturational organic aspect to the detriment of the soul one? Mateus (2008) points out that the use of this term was more common in the milieu Freud frequented and performs an exegesis exercise in order to deduce its meaning within the Freudian text. In his reading, he highlights that the emphasis is on puberty being a second moment of sexuality that disrupts the subjective conformation built up until then.

Under the term puberty, Freud (1905/1996) includes both bodily and psychological transformations. This becomes evident when he talks about the three stimuli that cause sexual arousal: the first one comes from the outside world through the excitation of erogenous zones; the second one comes from the inside world, from the organism (following hitherto little known pathways); the third one comes from the soul life which, as he defines it, “constitutes a repository of external impressions and a receptor of internal excitations” (Freud, 1905/1996, p.150). It is precisely this third path of excitation that allows us to state that when Freud talked about puberty he was aiming at the psychic (Alberti, 2009).

It is important to note that for Freud human sexuality, radically different from what is at play in the animal kingdom, has two times. The idea of a bitemporality in the constitution of sexuality puts the evolutionary view in check, because it is of fundamental importance this force of rupture that marks what Freud calls the latency period. The Freudian conception of infantile sexuality presupposes a type of temporality that is not exactly chronological. This is because childhood is not exactly a period of life, but something that gains significance retroactively. Childhood is always lost, and it will be the emergence of this second time of sexuality that, a posteriori, will signify the previous time as infantile. The infantile is, therefore, the “before” while signified in the “after”.

The proposition of a sexuality split into two times is sympathetic to the claim that its origin is linked to the narcissistic investment of parents in their children in early childhood, subverting the organism into a libidinated body that seeks both autoerotic pleasure and objects of satisfaction. This makes the parents the privileged objects of sexual investment in this early period. The latency period is the one that marks precisely the rupture of this early sexual conformation through the repressing of libidinal impulses toward the parents. A period of relative suspension of sexuality is installed, which will be interrupted by puberty. This is why it can be thought of as the irruption of the second period of sexuality. Thus, puberty is presented as something that belongs to the body, but that requires a new psychic operation.

As Alberti (2009, p.167) states, “if the *gestalt* of the body changes, the adolescent's environment also changes, because the *gestalt* is precisely the image in the space in which it is perceived”. The author emphasizes, thus, the incidence that the social bond has on what is experienced as adolescent transformations. If there are changes in the body - and Freud highlights the menarche and pollution - there are also changes in the way this body is perceived by others.

The image that was in place until then becomes insufficient to face the other. If the child could enjoy childhood sexual theories - playing at being mom or dad, believing that one day, when he grew up, he would become one - for the adolescent, they are no longer a shield against the demands of the other. He has effectively grown up.

Mateus (2008, p. 230) points out that:

Immersed in an imaginary broth that finds no symbolic support for its translation, the strangeness experienced arises with the gaze that takes the adolescent body not exactly as an object of tenderness or narcissistic investment, but (from the point of view of the gazer) as a sexual object.

Thus, the crisis of adolescence points to an insufficiency of the image conformed until then in front of the Other - and here we make reference to the idea of Other proposed by Lacan not only as the treasure of signifiers, but also as being the symbolic and cultural order itself. If the child, faced with the question “what does the Other want from me?” - embedded in the famous whys that try to know the purpose of everything -, formulated theories that one day he could be like mom or dad, for the adolescent this future has already arrived and the way the adult looks at this young body denounces that it is no longer taken only as an object of libidinal and narcissistic investment, it is now also seen as a sexual object.

The mismatched encounter with sexual difference - let's remember that Freud was emphatic when he placed among the infantile sexual theories the one that endowed all beings with a penis and, even in the face of its absence, the belief that one day it would grow - puts under suspicion what was taken for granted. In other words, the changes experienced during adolescence show that the psychic constructions that constituted an image with which the child identified himself show its limitations. This disturbance in the mirror image has been meant in contemporaneity as being of the order of a crisis.

In this sense, we could conclude that crisis is inherent to adolescence, as a moment of passage to adult sexual life. However, we should ask whether the critical character of adolescence is all enclosed in the idea of the loss of a supposed previous stability given by a cohesive body image. Should we, in a psychoanalytic characterization of adolescence, be content with the explanation that it is the loss of a wholeness experienced in childhood? Furthermore, what consequences do these views on what is at stake in adolescence have on the education given to adolescents? If we maintain, based on Freud, that lost childhood is only constituted as such *a posteriori*, this idea encourages us to go beyond this characterization of the adolescent crisis.

To try to answer this question, it is important to go back to the first period of sexuality, when the child seeks satisfaction in autoeroticism, but also in making himself an object capable of satisfying parental desire and being worthy of the narcissistic investment dedicated to him. In his structural reading of the Freudian case of Little Hans, Lacan (1956-7/1995) approaches what would be the impasse inherent to the constitution of the divided subject, an impasse manifested in infantile anguish. With this, he questions the idea that the mother-child relationship would be marked by full satisfaction that would be disturbed by the incidence of the castrating figure of the father. The Lacanian reading reveals a much more complex situation, in which the tension inherent to the advent of the subject of desire is already at stake in the relationship between mother and child, since the object of desire is an object that has always been lost.

The child's attempt, manifested in the infantile sexual theories, to apprehend a knowledge about the sexual that would allow him to be the object of maternal desire, finds the limit of an impasse in the form of the irruption of anguish, summoning castration as a passage from the impasse to the impossible apprehension of the object of desire. The child is thus faced with an interdiction, an impossibility of knowing and giving consistency to that which is a desire for a desire and not an object.

The father takes the form of a function of metaphorization, that is, of the replacement of the object of maternal desire by a signifier whose signification is always unstable. In his text *Subversion of the subject and the dialectics of desire*, Lacan (1960/1998, p.839) points out that the real function of the father is in "uniting (and not opposing) a desire to the law". This is because what is transmitted, via the law, is desire as unsatisfied. In the words of Safouan (1970, p. 85), it is the "desire for the mother imposed by the father, who forbids it".

This interdiction leads to the repression of infantile sexual investigations, giving the latency period this characteristic of suspension. According to Lacan, the operation of the paternal metaphor is that of the "institution of something that is of the order of the signifier, that is kept in reserve, and whose signification will develop later" (Lacan, 1957-8/1999, p. 202). Thus, the interdiction that operates as a cut on the infantile libidinal tendencies would be accompanied by a future promise of satisfaction. The child would find consolation in this wait in which, even Freud (1905/1996) locates the construction of sublimatory processes in which sexual energy is invested in objects of culture.

According to Rassial (1999), the child accepted the interdiction because it was accompanied by a promise: that of a jouissance announced for later. However, adolescence would be the moment when "the promise of the Oedipus proves to be deceptive" (Rassial, 1999, p. 47). The fact that this promise is deceptive is exactly related to the idea that what the paternal metaphor establishes, according to Lacan, is "of the order of the signifier". The functioning of the signifier chain, to which every speaking being is subjected, happens in a paradoxical way. On the one hand, it tends to close in an ultimate signification, that is, in an object capable of satisfying desire; at the same time, it has an opening force given by the fact that the signifier that would complete the chain and close the signification is a signifier of lack.

This is precisely what Lacan (1956-7/1995) formulates around the case of little Hans, stating that the boy's psychic suffering is the expression of an impasse around the game experienced in parental

relationships. At the same time that he feels that his existence depends on his position as the object of maternal desire, this position places him before the threat of being devoured by a desire that is structurally insatiable. The only possible way out of this impasse, according to Lacan, is the incidence of the symbolic order, that is, the order of the signifier that allows the signification of maternal desire to be slippery, making the search for this object capable of closing the meaning of desire something incessant. This is what is at stake in the incidence of the paternal metaphor (Anacleto, 2019).

With this, we are faced with the fact that the entry into the symbolic is that which installs the paradox between closing and opening of signification as an always conflicting mode of the divided subject inhabiting language. It is in the key of the inscription of this paradox that one can understand that it is marked by a promise of completeness (closure) made not to be fulfilled (openness). The effort to unveil the mystery about a supposed object of maternal desire introduces the child in the desiring circuit at the same time that this circuit feeds back on the impossibility of this object being apprehensible.

This Lacanian formulation is the one that enables him to think of a structure of determination of existence that does not annul the possibility of emergence of the subject as an effect of difference and, therefore, of indetermination, since the representation of the subject in language will always be marked by a rest that escapes signification and that enables him to invent new ways of (self) saying. Therefore, the promise of a *jouissance* other than partial *jouissance*, promise of completeness in an ultimate signification or of a knowledge about desire, can only be deceptive.

It is precisely in adolescence that, according to Rassial, the subject is confronted for the first time with “the realization that any promise of another *jouissance* promises only death” (Rassial, 1999, p.47). Thus, for Rassial, adolescence, as a psychoanalytic concept, should be thought of as a symbolic operation of confirmation (or not) of what happened in the first period of infantile sexuality as an inscription of the signifier of lack.

## THE ADOLESCENT AWAKENING AND THE CRISIS OF EDUCATING

Following the Freudian-Lacanian path, one can think of a crisis of adolescence in the sense of a structural change that the young person goes through once confronted with the sexual and with the reaffirmation of this narcissistic shaking proper to the inscription of the paternal metaphor. However, this does not mean that every adolescent is in crisis. This is an important differentiation, since our culture has been attributing this meaning to what is often called “*aborrescência*” (in Brazilian Portuguese, a wordplay of the words adolescence and annoyance). Here the way in which the social discourse gives meaning to this constitutive experience of subjectivity comes into question.

In adolescence there is a change in the structural position in relation to sex that has an effect on the social bond. Psychoanalytic experience shows us that only by listening to a subject can we follow the intricacies of his or her meanings. Thus, this experience - in which the conformation that was in force until then is shaken in its power to interpret the cultural and soul world - will be experienced by each one in a singular way, in the relationship with the culture and institutions in charge of youth, among which the school stands out.

It is worth remembering, as Freud (1921/2011) proposed, that every individual psychology is also social, thus there is no psychic purism in which the individual would engender his own being. It is always in the bond with the Other that the subjective constitution takes place, that is, it is these “little others” that embody the big Other that will suppose and attribute meaning to the manifestations of the human baby. This brief parenthesis serves to relaunch the importance of the social bond - which is at the foundation of the unconscious and the subject - so that we can think about the processes of subjectivation inherent to adolescence.

This adolescent body that appears as strange to the subject incites him to search for new meanings, because the previous ones have proved insufficient to cope with the enigma of sex. Thus, the adolescent can find in culture the terms that will situate him/her in the social bond. That is, the idea of an adolescent in crisis conveyed nowadays may become one of the names to signify this transition for a subject.

Corso and Corso (1999), emphasizing what they consider the gains of adolescence, establish it as a moment of founding events, marked by a psychic work of elaboration of affiliation, that is, of questioning one's own history that would make it possible to narrate and organize it for the first time. Alberti (2009) highlights the fact that Freud states that at puberty there is a detachment from parental authority. This generational difference carries a cultural mark and endorses the soul aspect as the preponderant one in the Freudian view. Rassial (1999, p. 52), for his part, highlights that it is a logical moment “in which the operation of the Name-of-the-Father [as Lacan names this signifier of the lack and at the same time of the law] must [...] leave its imaginary representation sustained in the family,” expanding and diversifying the symbolic references and the possibilities of social bonding.

Thus, we see that adolescence involves an elaboration of filiation in the sense of relativizing the place occupied by the parents in favor of a pluralization of referential. However, we are faced with the ways in which contemporary social discourse attributes meanings to the adolescent experience that reveal important obstacles to this symbolizing function. Precisely, what we intend to highlight is that adults and their institutions may hinder this passage of the adolescent in search of new meanings to the extent that they refuse to admit the inexistence of a full satisfaction to be lost or found again. Two sides of the same coin: adolescence being characterized both as misfortune and as a social ideal.

Corso and Corso (1999) point out that adolescence arouses in the adult the irruption of a traumatic experience associated with the idealization of childhood proper to modernity. It is the moment in which this idealization is put in check by both parents and children, since these, more than ever, do not (co)respond to the imaginary ideals designed in the parental dreams.

Paradoxically, for Pereira and Gurski (2014, p. 378), we follow in contemporaneity a growing centrality of the adolescent as “paradigmatic subject of his social time.” They speak, therefore, in terms of a generalized adolescence as a stopping point of a world in which an excess of the present and a lack of future perspective predominate. Adolescence would be seen as the pinnacle of perfection, of absolute enjoyment, of happiness. Becoming the depository of a social ideal, the adolescent is confronted with an excessively imagined demand. Adults address to the young person a demand to “be somebody” in the key of an imaginary unity without holes. Thus, if on one hand there is the emphasis on the loss of an idealized childhood, on the other hand, there is the demand that the child dreamed of by adults as an adult of the future who lacks nothing (Lajonquière, 1999) should, in adolescence, prove that this future has arrived.

The response given by adolescents to this imperative of enjoyment is often that of inadequacy. Pereira and Gurski (2014) highlight not only the tendency to “tribalization,” but a series of pathologies such as addiction, attention deficit, disorders, suicide. As a key to reading these phenomena, the authors point to the attempt to paralyze this demand in the face of the “impossibility of [...] having some answer about the dilemma of being something desirable for someone” (Pereira & Gurski, 2014, p. 380). Even when it is not a pathological response, there is generally a sense of discomfort in adults generated by the critical gaze that adolescents often direct at them.

Projecting onto the adolescent the trauma of the loss of an idealized childhood or the possibility that this loss does not exist are two ways of veiling the structural impossibility of narcissistic completeness. Thus, the crisis of adolescence shows its relation to something that happens in the addressing of the word of adults to children and adolescents, that is, something that concerns the education that is given to the new generations. With this, we ask ourselves if the crisis in question is not, therefore, the same one that marks our times with regard to education, insofar as it mobilizes the way in which the past and the future are defined.

Addressing an educational word to the adolescent bears the marks of an adult relationship with the past. It is this very relationship that is experienced in a critical way since modernity, and especially with the accelerated social transformations throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries. It can be said that modernity is built, among other things, on the secularization of culture and, therefore, on the opening of the future to indeterminacy, uncoupling it from divine whims. The future becomes a time that needs to be built. This implies a new relationship with the past as well.

Lefort (1979/1999), considering the humanist conception of education created in Europe in the 14th century, talks about how the indeterminacy about the future, proper to a new relationship with knowledge when divine providence is questioned, establishes a new relationship with the past. The past

is no longer seen as a source of certainty as to the future, but in any case, as a source that men must look to in order to recover what is missing in the present. Thus, the mission of the present to build a future as a work based on the reading of the past as a restoration of the identity of the ancients is established.

This opening of the future to indeterminacy, typical of modernity, would, according to Lefort, summon the notion of responsibility, which Hannah Arendt (1957/2005) also addresses when dealing with the modern crisis in education. For Arendt, the notion of crisis can be seen as the opportunity, given the disappearance of the preconceptions that used to support decisions, to investigate the essence of what is in crisis. In her words:

A crisis forces us back to the very questions and demands new or old answers, but in any case, straightforward judgments. A crisis only becomes a disaster when we respond to it with preformed judgments, that is, with prejudices. Such an attitude not only sharpens the crisis but deprives us of the experience of reality and the opportunity it affords for reflection (Arendt, 1957/2005, p. 223).

The indetermination about the future inaugurated with modernity calls into question the essence of education, which, for Arendt (1957/2005, p. 223), resides in the fact that “beings are born into the world”. Education in the modern world is permeated by the tension between the continuity of the world and the opening to the new. The educational crisis reveals the crisis proper to the modern world and, at the same time, provides the opportunity to reflect on what is essential, that is, on what the arrival of children in the human world imposes on those who are already there. In this regard, Arendt maintains that the arrival of the new requires adults to take responsibility both for this new being still in formation and for the world, for its preservation in the face of the arrival of the new that can be destructive to it. Distinguishing between what concerns the preservation of life and the preservation of the world, he poses the dual task of education: to protect the child's life from the dangers of the world and to protect the world from the dangers that the arrival of a new being poses to its continuity.

As to this second aspect, the philosopher points out that the educator, in the face of the child, is the one who assumes the role of being “representative of a world for which he must take responsibility, even though he has not done so and even though secretly or openly he may wish it to be different from what it is” (Arendt, 2005, p. 239). This is even what can give him authority: to assume, before those who have just arrived, the responsibility for the conservation of the world.

However, the estrangement from the world proper to modernity, radicalized “under the conditions of a mass society” (Arendt, 2005, p. 242), gives rise to what the author calls the “*pathos of the new*,” giving rise to a refusal of responsibility in favor of an education seen as a political instrument for building a new world at the expense of the old, as if it were simply possible to break the continuity in which changes in this, our only old world, take place.

Arendt ascribes a double meaning to the modern loss of authority: it both means the demand for shared responsibility and a repudiation of all responsibility. However, as far as education is concerned, even the first sense of the loss of authority, that is, its replacement by shared responsibility, reinstates generational authority itself in what is distinctive about it from political authority, which is that it is sustained in a temporal and temporary asymmetry. To make the construction of a new world the goal of education is an illusion, because it deprives the new generation of “its own opportunity to face the new” (Arendt, 1957/2005, p. 226).

For the author, this “*pathos of the new*” had as one of its consequences in the field of education the suspension of “normal human judgment” (Arendt, 1957/2005, p. 227) in favor of educational theories. We can, from other references, highlight the emergence in the educational field of a normative pedagogical discourse based on positive science, where the indetermination about the future gives way to the certainty of being able to control the means and ends of education aiming at the achievement of an ideal of progress.

All this contributes to the loss of the notion of responsibility. This is what Arendt denounces when she talks about a deepening crisis in education given the rejection by adults of the responsibility for the preservation of the common world - refusal of adults “to take responsibility for the world to which they brought the children” (Arendt, 2005, p.240). In this sense, the “*pathos of the new*” would point to



a break with tradition in favor of techno-scientific references that, paradoxically, would reinstall a form of relationship with the future in which indeterminacy would be threatened.

Walter Benjamin (1933/1987), in the first decades of the 20th century, points out what he considers the misery inherent to modernity resulting, precisely, from the technical progress that shakes the connection with the past. The future disconnected from the past becomes a future that is no longer indeterminate because it is no longer tensioned by the rescue of the “would have been”. The remains of the past, that which is missing, are handed over to the techno-scientific knowledge, transformed into certainties and preventing questions from being asked.

Technical progress as an end in itself starts to operate as a new form of justificationism where before we found religion. In the educational field, we see the conformation of a normative pedagogical discourse that accompanies, throughout the 19th century, the conjugation of positive science with the birth of medical-pedagogical power. The future is now deposited in the emerging knowledge of experimentation, which functions as a normative knowledge based on what is supposed to be the natural development of the psychological potentialities of the child (Lajonquière, 1999).

The positivist and normative medical-pedagogical discourse that consolidates itself throughout the 20th century both in school institutions and in the treatment of children and adolescents with psychic disorders is the object of reflection of Maud Mannoni (1977). The psychoanalyst focuses on the effect of capture that this discourse has on the personal speech of adolescents. She is involved in thinking about the schooling of those who were excluded from the normal school in France in the last century, when she states that pedagogy subordinates education to the image of an ideal that cannot be questioned, asking the student to come “to illustrate the good foundation of a doctrine” (1977, p.50). From this emerges what it denounces as impossible education.

The author, in her classic book on the subject, takes up the Freudian aphorism about the three impossible professions to point out a distinction of what she highlights as being of the order of a reduction of the chances of education to have subjective effects. It is precisely this difference between the inherent impossibility of educating - which has to do precisely with the indeterminate character of its effects - and an education unable to have subjective effects - insofar as it intends to control educational results by means of methods and techniques - that poses the greatest challenges to educational institutions aimed at adolescents.

Thus, the excess of the present and the future delivered to the mere repetition of the same mark the subjective experience in contemporaneity and make the adolescent crossing difficult. The logic of efficiency and performance is denounced by Mannoni (1977) as that which makes institutions act in the sense of being an end in themselves, not offering any future perspective. While young people would be in search of a “reason for living,” among adults there would reign an absence of dreams of overcoming or, when they do appear, they are disconnected from daily practice.

As an effect of this process, we have the densification of a nosographic discussion guided by pathology as a name given to what appears as uneasiness in the bond established with the adolescent in contemporaneity. Parents and children struggle in their painful processes of de-idealization of a narcissistically invested childhood while they find in the culture meanings that intend to eternalize adolescence as a static time of the happiness imperative. The word crisis, therefore, summons us to the Arendtian exercise of revisiting our references in the formulation of answers - be them new or old - for which we not only take responsibility but also implicate ourselves in searching for beacons for the construction of a future that, however, reiterates the significant opening necessary for the advent of the new.

Hence the importance of the school institution in what we understand to be its primordial function, a place heterogeneous to the family that has the function of presenting the world and transmitting that which societies have understood to have an importance that transcends the time of a human life as it is passed on from generation to generation. School is the *locus* where young people will find other peers who will be able to accompany them in this moment of crossing.

## YOUTH AND SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

In this educational scenario, how should we think about the school experience of young people? Since adolescence is a time of transformation marked by the opening to new meanings and the expansion of the social bond, it is important to think about how the school has managed to welcome these young people without operating the “kidnapping of the subject,” to use a notion of Mannoni (1977).

Displacing the question of the crisis of adolescence from an individual scope and as a simple consequence of a phase of life determined by organic changes, we point out its close relationship with the way in which adolescence has effects on the social bond and its crisis unveils something that concerns education in the modern world. We also highlight how the answers to this crisis engender, in place of divine designs, a new form of justification based on techno-scientificism inherited from positive science and allied to the evolutionist idea of progress.

Even so, we sustain the idea that the school institution may come to play an important symbolizing role for the subjective experience of adolescents in their passage to adulthood. However, it remains to be questioned how the school can face up to this hegemonic social discourse in which the denial of adults of their responsibility for a world marked by the lack of full satisfaction to be lost and/or found again.

Rosa and Carmo-Huerta (2020) point out that the adolescent awakening cannot be thought of separately from the political scene in which it takes place. It is necessary to have a minimum symbolic support in the discursive, social, and political logic to the adolescent subject. In this sense, the authors focus on the marginalized bodies that have their manifestations disqualified in our culture, often being taken as a sign of criminality - the way of dressing, the language of the groups, or even their taste in music. They point out that it is up to the social discourse to allow the adolescent to “assert himself in a discursive bond in which he can, by telling his own story, also tell the story of his time, against the official story, illuminating the darkness of the bonds in play” (Rosa and Carmo-Huerta, 2020, p. 17).

The disqualification and subordination of the bodies also enter the educational institution, so that the school is not constituted as a territory of significant sliding, but rather the opposite, it seals destinies, labels and stigmatizes.

Silvia Duschatzky (2008, p.5), a professor at FLACSO who dedicates her researches to think about the school experience of young people from lower social classes, defines school as a border place:

School, for the youth of our universe, constitutes a possibility, an incomplete encounter that, rather than closing the experiential field, defines thresholds for new encounters. Thinking of school in terms of possibility and not as a self-sufficient and excluding discourse frees us from the pedagogical illusion of turning it into a “total” place for the constitution of juvenile identity.

For the author, the school should maintain the opening of the chain of meanings rather than trying to enclose the youth in one more meaning that is imposed on him/her. The emptiness of meaning, opened by the insufficiency of childhood identifications, ends up being filled with the signs of school failure, of dropping out, of the utilitarian techno-scientificism of professionalization, with a life of crime, the praise of suicide... There are many such figures today.

What seems central to us is to affirm that, within this scenario of transition that marks adolescence, the wandering in search of new subjective significations can find in the school territory a space to be experienced without, hastily, being captured in a closed and often excluding sense.

Voltolini (2019) highlights the process by which the school institution has been losing ground to the notion of organization. While “the primary concern of every organization is its functioning, its vigor and its perpetuation,” the concern of the “institution is to promote that which erected it as such, which founded it with a specific function” (Voltolini, 2019, p.381). This debate allows us to return to a statement by Mannoni (1977, p. 189) when he states that “Every institution separated from an interest that supplants it has deadly effects”.

The school has the function of welcoming the adolescents so that they can have access to the knowledge accumulated through the generations that preceded them and, with this, create senses and possible narratives that inscribe their experience in the social bond. If, currently, we live in a time in which the logic of organization supplants that of institution, we must be attentive to the warning made

by Voltolini (2019, p.381) when he wonders about the consequences of this decline since for psychoanalysis “institutionality is an element that plays a fundamental role in the organization of civilization”.

It is a matter of insisting on the symbolizing function that school can play in the experience of these youngsters when the separation from parental figures gives new impulse to the opening of meanings. Rassial (1999, pp. 48-9) points out that this separation from the parental figures is accompanied by the “realization that parents are not founders, but transmitters, since they themselves had parents, grandparents, who could indicate an impossible Other of the Other”. The author refers with this expression to a Lacanian formulation that concerns precisely this inexistence of a signifier capable of completing the chain of signification. In other words, it is the same affirmation of the non-existence of an all-powerful father capable of giving the last word about the future of the human world. The non-existence of this absolute Other is precisely what sustains the importance of adults taking responsibility for the world and for the introduction, in this world, of children.

This decline in the power of the institutional in favor of organizational systems in the school field makes us shift the debate to question the school that has been designed for the near future. In this sense, the experiences of young people - especially those of lower income classes, but not only - should be analyzed as a way to know the effects on the subjectivity of a technical and utilitarian discourse that has been gaining ground and multiplying in the evaluation furor (Passone, 2015) that measures adaptation mechanisms sustained in the fallacious school quality at the expense of the transmission of a symbolic legacy and of belonging to the world.

The school suffers from the crisis of the modern world, both of going back and of simply going forward. Arendt says that the estrangement from the world has taken the form of an automatic process. However, she warns that “we must not forget that it is within the power of human thought and action to interrupt and stop such processes” (Arendt, 1957/2005, p. 245). This implies precisely an ethical step. It is in this context that we can glimpse the contribution that the ethical vision of psychoanalysis in its encounter with the educational field brings regarding the challenge of contemporary school in what it offers to adolescents.

## **EDUCATING AND PSYCHOANALYSIS: AN ETHICAL STEP**

In the words of Gurski (2017, p.222), the ethics of psychoanalysis aims to enable the subject “to resist the tyranny of the One and to enable ways for him not to bow to any totality of the Other.” Voltolini (2011), also sustaining the same ethical position in the field of psychoanalysis and education, states that psychoanalysis does not enter the field to answer or elucidate educational problems, but to cause questions in which subjects can implicate themselves.

The Freudian idea of impossibility inherent to the act of educating points to an ethical position in the face of modernity's challenge to tradition. The dimension of the impossible introduced by Freud (1937/2018) points to the need to preserve empty the place left vacant by the modern dismissal of the figure of an all-powerful father instead of feeding new forms of justificationism that, in education, take the form of a child nature to be preserved or rediscovered through methods and techniques consistent with techno-scientificism.

According to Lajonquière (2010), the challenge of modernity is to recognize the illusion both of an all-powerful father who, having been murdered, would need to be restored, and of a child nature that, having been lost, would need to be found again. Such recognition demands a ceaseless ethical work of reinventing politics sustained by a shared responsibility. Thus, the addressing of the educational word is based on the recognition of an unpayable symbolic debt with the past, but that can be passed on to the future generation.

It is only with this reinvention of politics in the world of the old that one can face the challenge of welcoming the new into this world, bearing witness to our responsibility in passing on this debt that is that of our own fragility of origin. The adolescent, for being in the middle between being small and being big, places us more acutely before this critical condition of becoming old in the modern world. Even more so in the face of the exacerbation of totalizing forces that spare no effort in rejecting desire as the breath of what little humanity we have left.

Looking into the idea of the crisis of adolescence allows us to question the school we have been offering our young people. What destinies have been drawn in this institution? What ways have we found to welcome the unique and idiosyncratic manifestations? That the adolescent may say about himself and that his personal word may update what has been said about him in a discursive dynamic: this is one way of announcing the ethical vision of psychoanalysis in the educational field concerning young people in contemporary times.

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