

The Context of Modernizing Reforms of Teaching in Portugal in the Second half of the 18th Century: the Educational Project of Franciscan Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo

Cássia Regina Dias Pereira¹

¹(Collegiate of Pedagogy/ Unespar- campus Paranavaí, Universidade estadual do Paraná, Brasil)

ABSTRACT : *This text is a synthesis of the content of a thesis defended in the PPE-UEM. The study aimed to analyze the articulation of the educational project of Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo Villas Boas (1724-1814), Franciscan Friar, Bishop of Beja (1770-1802) and Archbishop of Évora (1803-1814), 18th century Portuguese intellectual. He played an outstanding role in the educational and political field during the period of Pombaline studies reforms. The research is justified by the importance of analyzing the articulation that the prelate made of the principles of the Enlightenment with the need to modernize Portuguese education for scientific and cultural development. We selected for the study the pedagogical manual written by him in 1791 Literary Care. It is a collection of his pedagogical thinking and gives guidance on the organization of the relations between teaching and learning in order to make teaching useful and in connection with the current social order. The analysis took place in relation to the context of political and economic changes in the Pombaline period, in which its political and pedagogical performance stands out.*

KEYWORDS -About Education. History of Education,XVIII century, Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo, Portuguese Enlightenment.

1. Introduction

This text presents the synthesis of the procedures used in the research that resulted in the elaboration and defense of the thesis entitled: The educational project of Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo (1724-1814) in the context of the modernizing reforms of teaching in Portugal in the second half of the 18th century.

In order to support the achievement of the proposed objectives and debate on the guiding problem of the research, the work Literary Care (1791) was analyzed because in the 512 pages of that pedagogical manual Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo reinforced his defense of the good training of the teacher and the need for planning and organization of classes, the use of a good teaching method, and highlighted the practical utility of teaching for the development and wealth of the State.

Historical research allows us to study the action of man in time and space, favoring the analysis of the processes and events that constitute culture and human education.

When organizing for work, men create a series of habits, behaviors, ways of acting and thinking, constituting culture. Education is the means by which this culture is organized and transmitted.

Although it occurs in all societies, education does not present itself in a unique way, it constantly changes because it is an expression of the social of each time, of each period of history. Thus, the particular characteristics of each era provide us with content for the apprehension of man as a historical, social and cultural being.

Aiming to deepen the studies on the pedagogical conceptions that grounded and grounded the changes in the educational field, this research carried out a study based on the analysis of the articulation of the educational project of the Franciscan friar Manuel Manuel do Cenáculo (1724-1814), Portuguese intellectual who lived and acted in the second half of the 18th century. Period marked by reforms called pombaline education, inspired by the Enlightenment movement.

Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo, ecclesiastical, politician, pedagogue, reformer, philosopher, historian, was an active participant in the reform context of the second half of the 18th century in Portugal. He held positions of political influence in the reign of Dom José I (1714-1777, king since 1750) and government of his first minister Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo. He was a deputy and later president of the Real Mesa Censória, president of the Junta da Providência Literária (1772) and Junta do Literário Subsídio (1772), had a prominent role in the reform of the University of Coimbra (1772) and was a preceptor and confessor (1768) do Príncipe da Beira, D. José son of D. Maria I (1734-1816). Provincial of the Francis Order in Portugal (1768-1777), Bishop of Beja (1770-1802) and Archbishop of Évora (1803-1814).

The intellectual biography of Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo points to him as a man of eclectic mentality, open to the transformations of his time and willing to disseminate scientific studies in Portugal. Research on his performance shows that he outlined projects that demonstrated his consonance with the illustrated ideas, which aimed to multiply the means of information and the acquisition of knowledge, to make them available to the public.

It is precisely in the spirit of openness to the new values of illustrated thought that we find in Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo a prominent representative of the so-called Catholic Enlightenment of Portugal. He, through his pedagogical action, promoted the implementation of new study methods that collaborated for the reform of teaching on Portuguese soil with great repercussions in the colonies.

With the objective of reforming the studies of his religious order, he wrote several works that expressed a pedagogical conception in line with the Enlightenment thinking of his time, appropriate to the new concept of scientific education and showing a modernizing pedagogy, in order to eliminate the cultural backwardness in Portuguese society.

It is a documentary and bibliographic research, which followed the criteria of content analysis in the delimitation, collection and analysis of data. The dialectical analysis of the data was chosen for the development of the objectives because it is characterized by the movement of thought through the historical materiality of the life of men in society, that is, it is about discovering (through the movement of thought) the fundamental laws that define the men's social organization.

The bibliographical survey was organized based on the mapping of the works of Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo, verifying their availability in national and international libraries and the possibility of acquiring and existence of digitized works. Brazilian research was sought whose object was the figure of the Portuguese prelate. After this exercise, the structure of the study was established, which sought to organize the approaches that constituted the context of the period, highlighting the educational, political and pastoral action of the prelate.

Issues related to education, the teaching method and the usefulness of instruction, were themes present in the process of modernization of Portuguese society in the second half of the 18th century and assumed a prominent role in the educational project of Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo. In that context the work *Literary Care* (1791) was inserted.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundation

Pedagogical thinking arises with the reflection on the practice of education, as a need for systematization and organization according to certain ends and objectives. The temporal space of this research was located in the 18th century. Period when there was a great social, political, economic, ideological, cultural and pedagogical movement, the Enlightenment. This was marked by transformations that made it possible to change the mindset, producing a new way of interpreting the reality that became centered on reason and science,

and disseminated revolutionary ideas that influenced the pedagogical thinking of the countries that were involved by the movement of lights.

The consolidation of National States in Europe marked the end of the feudal economic system and the centralization of real power in a new configuration of political alliances. The unification of the territory favored the increase of the population and the intensification of the exchange between city and countryside facilitated the strengthening of trade.

The expansion of trade made it necessary to discover new methods of organization and commercial direction, as well as the creation of new means of financing and guiding its activities. [...] privileged companies continued to play a leading role. (RUDÉ, 1995, p. 66) [1].

In the 18th century, commerce assumed a privileged position in the economic structure, receiving and demanding political protection from the State. In this way, there was a general, but uneven, expansion of trade in the 18th century, which particularly benefited France and England. The increase in commercial relations stimulated the development and improvement of the industry, which went from artisanal production to manufacturing and with technological advancement, reached the large industry.

The industrialization process led to improved product quality and reduced prices, increasing the need to create consumer markets, generating significant changes in social and work organization.

A new material base was established that gave support to a new social model, the bourgeois society centered on the perspective that man is made by work. This cultural transition was characterized by the contradiction between the absolutist monarchy and the formation of bourgeois society (RUDÉ, 1995) [1].

The absolutist state marked the transition from feudal to bourgeois society, based on a protectionist policy and a commercial monopoly. Traders were responsible for discovering new markets that supply raw materials, as well as consumers. This mercantilist policy favored the consolidation of National States and the absolute power of kings. In mercantilism, the performance of the State was present in all spheres, in the same way that the figure of the king influenced the lives of individuals.

In this context, the Modern State was structured, which was centralized, controlled by the king in all its functions. The conception of power has changed, which although anchored in a social vision of the monarch figure, the effective exercise of power has been distributed throughout society, through a system of control of institutions (of the school, the bourgeoisie, the army, the intellectuals) delegated to the consensus elaboration and installation of a state logic in society (RUDÉ, 1995) [1].

Secularism emancipated the mentality of society, of the religious division of the world and of human life, linking man to freedom and progress. Rationalization produced a revolution in knowledge, through the free use of reason. The Enlightenment organic and explicitly characterized a new model of mentality with its opposition to metaphysics and its link with logical and experimental science. (RUDÉ, 1995) [1].

The research highlighted the period of crisis, transition and transformation that occurred in Portugal in the second half of the 18th century, under the influence of Enlightenment ideals, observing the peculiarity of the adaptation made by those to the precepts of the country's religious tradition.

Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo, defended and actively participated in the pedagogical reforms carried out during the reign of Dom José I and the government of his prime minister Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo the Marquis of Pombal. The analysis of his action as a pedagogue, politician and clergyman showed that his educational action transcended the period of reforms called Pombaline and was carried out in his pastoral action as Bishop of Beja (1770-1802) and Archbishop of Évora (1803-1814).

Enlightenment in Portugal had its first manifestations noticed in the reign of D. João V (1689-1750), it was more evident in the reign of D. José I (1750-1777) and took on new clothes in the reign of D. Maria I (1777-1792).

The development of the Portuguese Enlightenment movement was marked by the contrast of the dominant religious atmosphere and the new worldview based on science and reason. At that time, it was necessary to produce a new conception of society and man, suitable "reformed", according to the principles of liberalism, reason and science, breaking the pillars of tradition, superstition and ignorance that permeated the social and Portuguese cultural heritage.

It is under the sign of intellectual and moral reform of society, axis of well-being, progress and happiness, that the Marquis of Pombal, like other enlightened European despots, tries to secularize educational

institutions, subjecting them to the tutelage of the State. The "public need" and the practice of "civilized nations", constant expressions of royal diplomas, reinforced the idea that the State could objectively benefit from the rational and critical influx of science and the arts, placing them at the service of society (ARAÚJO, 2000, p. 32).

From the Pombaline reformist policy, a pedagogical dimension emerged. Education was seen as an essential pillar of social transformation, and its organization intended to convince everyone that a new social project was being built based on the harmonizing lights of reason (ARAÚJO, 2000) [2].

In this setting, Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo demonstrated his illustrated character. The prelate undertook an adaptation between religion and science in the performance of his pastoral duties, in his role as a member and later president of the Real Mesa Censória, and in the reform of the statutes of the University of Coimbra.

[...] it is in the context of the Pombaline reforms that we must insert the work of D. Frei Manuel do Cenáculo who actively participated in the Pombaline reforms and who later continued his pastoral action to take the banner of science and education to the rude and illiterate from Alentejo [...] as a man with a new mentality, he outlined projects that would have an impact on the dissemination of science among us. This new mentality went through an attitude, in line with the illustrated ideas, which consisted of multiplying the means of information and knowledge acquisition and making them available to the public (VAZ, 2009, p.7) [3].

The reforming bishop was very concerned with education, especially the parish priests, as they would develop their work with distant communities, formed by people with or without any education, hence the need to receive good training in order to help the population to get rid of misery, disease, superstition and ignorance.

[...] the pastoral action of the Bishop of Beja is dominated by the concern to instruct the clergy and the people in general. With regard to the clergy, it established a whole program of studies from the state of ordinands to the continuous training program, for clergy at all levels. For the rest of the diocesans, the people of this deep Alentejo that he knew well, the synonym for instruction was catechism. In both cases, instruction is the basis of reformism (VAZ, 2009, p.9)[4].

Cenacle's concern with education was also demonstrated in his effort and interest in acquiring books, works of art and nature, coins, antiques and other archaeological pieces, which are authentic means of information and knowledge. He sought to preserve and make the sources available so that everyone could know and acquire knowledge. "[...] we must conduct our applications in the effective reading of good books, looking for subjects of good instruction. A sage to be perfect in his profession must have knowledge of truth and error and for that he must have access to the use of books and necessary study objects" (CENÁCULO, 1769, p.84) [5].

To make access to the means of information feasible, he created libraries and museums, which in his view should always be built or housed together, united and with open doors so that people could have a more complete view of all the material available.

The scope of Dom Frei Manuel's educational project was revealed in practice with the pedagogical reforms undertaken by him in the formation studies of his Order that served as a basis for the reform of teaching in the Portuguese kingdom in the Pombaline period.

His literary production and concrete actions to promote the well-being of the population of his diocese endorsed his alignment with the Enlightenment ideas and indicated the structuring axis of his educational project in which education was identified as a determining factor for the development of society. . In defending the usefulness of knowledge and the use of a good teaching method with a scientific basis, he refuted education by the scholastic method that created a "closed barrier to true science" (CENÁCULO, 1791, p.9) [6].

The debate about the method was one of the themes that Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo paid attention to in his pedagogical writings, for him how teaching was directly linked to the results to be obtained with the

study of the materials, at that historical moment he understood it was essential to try to maintain a line of action that could guarantee the permanence of the Christian values of the Catholic tradition on Portuguese soil in line with the usefulness of teaching for the cultural and scientific development of the kingdom (CENÁCULO, 1791) [6].

The essential function of this new method was to overcome ignorance, illuminating the paths of the new way of thinking and producing the goods necessary for the welfare of society. To ensure that this path was properly followed, there was a need for monitoring, discipline and rules to guide students, teachers, clergy and people in general in the use of knowledge and in fulfilling their obligations to the Kingdom and to God.

In classes, there is an ordering to take the will and teaching power to explain the profound truths of our august mysteries; to carefully mortify indecencies in the cult and polish their performances with decorum and holiness, to dispel the hard addiction with vehemence and zeal. To drive with lost sight of the discovery of virtue, to make Christian life clean, to cool the burning ashes of hatred, error, and addiction in people. To help with patience, justice, charity and constancy the wrong ones of understanding. (CENÁCULO, 1791, p.5) [6].

In the book *Literary Care* and in most of his pedagogical writings, the prelate defended the use of the good teaching method, the good education of the teacher and expressed objectively his moderate criticism of scholasticism and his philosophical eclecticism, always emphasizing the need to know himself the “good” and the “bad” literary taste so that both were necessary and useful to deepen knowledge.

3. Conclusion

The analysis of the constituent elements of the period of political, economic and educational transition experienced by Portuguese society in the second half of the 18th century, allowed, in this research, to highlight the articulation of the educational project of Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo with the context of the modernizing reforms of teaching in Portugal. He underlined his profile as a man of the Church, observant, sensitive, critical and active, who was at the head of a society in crisis.

The research underlined the importance that the prelate gave to education as an instrument for building society. The organization of schools, the articulation between the levels of education, their uniformity and continuity and the good training of the teacher, were the pillars on which he developed and put into practice his educational reform plan.

As a politician he was not a revolutionary, his action was aimed at improving the cultural and scientific conditions of society, preserving and encouraging charity and solidarity.

As a clergyman, he remained faithful to the principles of the Franciscan Order, defended faith in revealed religion and demonstrated in his practice the possibility of reconciling science and religion.

Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo's educational project contemplated his philosophical eclecticism and his option to make a moderate, but punctual criticism about the theoretical and methodological issues of teaching that were developed on Portuguese soil. His ideas of technical and scientific innovation did not refute tradition and accumulated knowledge, but guided him to seek literary updating that, together with the good concepts of the “ancients”, could complement the knowledge of the useful and the productive for society.

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