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Representation of families and raising children in Amar, verbo intransitivo, by Mário de Andrade (1944)¹

ARTICLE

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the modernist work To Love, intransitive verb, by Mário de Andrade (1944), seeking to show, from the novel, how the rich families of São Paulo of the Old Republic were approached in it, as well as what such text can reveal about the education of children. The notion of representation was used in this enterprise, considering that this category is not confused with imitation of the real, but edification made from it, as well as that literature is a cultural artifact capable of revealing meanings attributed to the world, and that these meanings are manifested in words, images, speeches, practices and things. As for the method, the notion of historiographical operation (Certeau, [1975]/2020) was used, which consists of critical analysis of traces of the past transformed into

Keywords: To Love, intransitive verb. History of education. Representation of family. Representation of children's education.

Representação das famílias e da educação das crianças em amar, verbo intransitivo, de Mário de Andrade (1944)

Resumo

O presente artigo tem por finalidade realizar uma análise da obra modernista Amar, verbo intransitivo, de Mário de Andrade (1944), buscando evidenciar, a partir do romance, como as famílias ricas paulistanas da República Velha foram nele abordadas, bem como o que tal texto pode revelar acerca da educação dos filhos. Utilizou-se, nesse empreendimento, sobretudo, a noção de representação, considerando que tal categoria não se confunde com imitação do real, mas edificação feita a partir dele, bem como que a literatura é artefato cultural apta a revelar sentidos atribuídos ao mundo, e que esses sentidos manifestam-se em palavras, imagens, discursos, práticas e coisas. Quanto ao método, foi utilizada a noção de operação historiográfica (Certeau, [1975]/2020), que consiste em análise crítica de vestígios do passado transformados em fonte.

Palavras-chave: Amar, verbo intransitivo. História da educação. Representação de família. Representação de educação dos filhos.

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1 Introduction

We begin our reflection with a haunting observation by the French historian Lucien Febvre (1989, p. 31), that a poem, a painting, a drama are artifacts of culture that serve, from the point of view of history, as powerful elements or testimonies for understanding the past or the extrinsic forces that permeated the writing or making. The astonishment refers to the fact that, traditionally, until the Annales school, only official documents were considered legitimate sources as a trace and voice of the past. It was a positivist view and this French movement changed the course of historiography in line with the formulation of new objects, approaches and historical problems which, correspondingly, began to demand an expansion of the universe of sources (Le Goff; Nora, 1995).

In fact, although there may be disagreement among some theorists who believe that art would not be a suitable trace of the past for the task of accurately narrating events, it seems appropriate to remember that literature is art, so that although the author is not a priori committed to the truth, he is not prevented from his work containing elements that refer to something true. Literature, therefore, is considered to be a fruitful source for illuminating objects that, perhaps, other types of officialdom would be unlikely to be able to deliver (Botelho; Duarte, 2021).

We believe that if we consider the verisimilitudes that can be extracted from literary texts, in comparison with other types of records that are contemporary to them, it is possible to take another look at the past, to understand mentalities, the rules of the game in force in society at a given time and space, as well as the practices in circulation and the workings of power relations and values. Perhaps this is why Robert Darnton (2010) classified literature and history as good neighbors, as Otávio Paz (1996), in Signs in Rotation, expressed that a poem is a machine for creating images and serves as an additional element for interpreting the context of its writing.

This hypothesis is based on the fact that we understand that literature is not simply made up of beautiful words strategically placed to delight and entertain the reader. More than that, it serves to lead us to understand human nature, the deepest challenges of

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feeling, acting and thinking, torments, dramas, social interaction, or even, from the perspective of the modernist novel, a genre that characterizes the crisis of the modern subject (Rosenfeld, 1973).

From this perspective, we should point out that Sidney Chalhoub (2003) carried out research in the field of history with the work Machado de Assis historiador (Machado de Assis the historian), using a literary writer to shed light on the understanding of 19th century Brazil. Not only that, but Fernandes' (2022) thesis A experiência do cuidado de si em Machado de Assis (The experience of self-care in Machado de Assis) revealed the importance of Machado's work for understanding educational issues, not to mention the dossier by Lima and Menezes (2022), published in the important journal Cadernos de História da Educação, which dealt with the "Contributions of literature to the History of Education", demonstrating the power of literature as a source for writing the History of Education.

We would add that literature stems from an ethos and serves an ethos, even if it is directed at a mere invitation to reflection or exerts an influence on readers, what Aristotle called catharsis, or even compassion, identification, laughter, fear or anger. It is from this perspective that we highlight the concept of representations, as it is applicable to the analysis intended here, defined as "[...] intellectual schemes that create the figures thanks to which the present can acquire meaning, the other become intelligible and space be deciphered" (Chartier, 2002, p. 17). This means that these schemes refer to the intellectual expedient of identifying categories that form representation as a socially existing practice.

With these questions in mind, we used the prose Amar, verbo intransitivo, henceforth referred to as Amar, by the modernist Mário de Andrade, published in 1927 and republished with changes in 1944, in an attempt to understand what this work can illuminate about São Paulo society from the 1920s to the 1940s, in terms of what it has to tell us, or even represent, about what wealthy families were like and how their children were viewed, conditioned and educated.

This work was also selected based on the provocation of Antonio Candido ([1965]/2019), who explained that Mário de Andrade's works were well synchronized with

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artistic, political and educational facts, and this has to do with his productions being influenced by the social movements of the 1920s and 1930s, considering that education was one of the major themes of that period and intellectuals functioned as important voices in attempts to bring about change (Herschmann; Pereira, 1994; Foucault, [1979]/2006).

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2 The family represented in amar

In summary, the novel tells us about a wealthy family from São Paulo at the beginning of the 20th century who lived in the prestigious Higienópolis district, made up of the father, Mr. Felisberto Sousa Costa; his wife, Mrs. Laura; their children, Carlos, Maria Luísa, Laurita and Aldinha, aged fifteen, twelve, seven and five respectively. In addition, Marina, the little black girl, and Tanaka, the Japanese servant, lived in the mansion.

The plot revolves around the job of teaching Carlos, the first-born, the German language, but as a facade, since the purpose of the contract was to give the boy lessons in sexual initiation and love through a pedagogy commissioned by the father together with Elza (who becomes unnamed when she enters the house). The teacher had her own method, which the narrator describes as the didactics of divine patience, which involved preparing the environment and seducing the boy at the height of puberty.

There, Fräulein (Miss in German) stayed for about a year, a slow task, since the exhaustion of the endeavor led the father to almost regret such an initiative, due to the delay². The teacher - who was technically a preceptor - was well paid, receiving eight contos de réis for her work and, after winning the student's trust and admiration, she led him to passion, remembering that this was also a pedagogical strategy, since the love taught was of a practical nature, without madness. It was in vogue to teach the boy not to be attached to women and to know how to deal with jealousy, so as to keep him safe from possible adventurous and self-interested women.

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² "Let's get it over with quickly! He wished. From time to time, sour rumblings of regret crept into his mind" (Andrade, 1995, p. 62).

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- ... And love isn't just what Mr. Sousa Costa thinks it is. I've come to teach love how it should be. That's what I intend to teach Carlos. Love that is sincere, elevated, full of practical sense, without madness. Today, madam, this is becoming a necessity since philosophy has invaded the land of love! (Andrade, [1944]/1995, p. 78).

It's important to note that Mrs. Laura didn't know the reasons for hiring the teacher, and only found out about the bait during her stay at the house, which caused her a furor that was quickly cooled by the prescription that the wife should be submissive and not oppose her husband's decisions. This is reminiscent of the passage in which the narrator perceptively establishes the counterpoint between the men and women of that time:

[...] Sousa Costa looks at the floor. Laura looks at the ceiling. Ah! creatures, creatures of God, how different you are! The Lauras will always look at the sky. The Felisbertos will always look at the ground. Ascending feminine soul... The male is attached to earthly filth. Let's put earthly filth (Andrade, 1995, p. 81).

There are many issues raised in Amar: the question of immigrants at the beginning of the 20th century; the contemplation of European objects and behavior; appearance versus essence; the repulsion to miscegenation³; the family based on the figure of the father; female submission; blacks as mere appendages, placed in peripheral and irrelevant places; old age; social arrangements to prevent rich young men from marrying poor women, in a logic of wealth preservation.

These issues lead us to think that both education and literature are crossed by culture, which in turn is seen as the lens or common ground through which we see the world (Benedict, 2002). This has to do with taking the symbolic universe in the context of subjectivation in a social process towards objectivation, making it the domain of practices that give meaning to beliefs, morals, laws, language, customs, the arts, festivals, myths, etc., but for the purposes of this section, we are only dealing with issues that Amar can tell us about families and the education of their children..

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³ As in the passage: "Felisberto, the father, hands folded behind his back to hide the thickness of his fingers, and glitter on his moustaches to disguise his mixed race. The mother: In hot weather, Mrs. Laura's black hair would have suspicious curls. She used comb-overs [...]" (Andrade, 1995, p. 55).



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The script took place in the private environment of the house, so it is important to think about what this work can reveal about the families represented there. From this perspective, both Mariana Muaze, in her 2016 essay entitled Pensando a família no Brasil: ganhos interpretativos a partir da micro-história (Thinking about the family in Brazil: interpretative gains from micro-history), and Eni de Mesquita Samara, in her 2002 article entitled O que mudou na família brasileira? (da colônia à actualidade), have in common the warning that thinking about the transformations of families and the factors involved is a very complex task.

Muaze (2016) points out that in the 1970s, historical narratives about families were common, resulting in analyses of the domestic economy based on the interpretation of legal instruments such as inventories, wills and marriage contracts. In the 1980s, research on the composition of households, families and fertility emerged, revealing that Brazil also had families headed by women, with few or more children.

In this dimension, Antoine Prost ([1989]/2020), Cristina Costa (2002) and also Mariana Muaze (2016) explain that, in the first half of the 20th century, the term "family" didn't just refer to the criterion of cohabitation, but also to social relations aimed at preserving property, hence the use of the expression "being from a good family", so that a marriage considered good had to do with the intangible value of belonging to or joining a certain family. However, these links were only possible "because there was a previous investment in the education, refinement and instruction of the girls who were good matches within the logic of family reproduction in force in the seigniorial class" (Muaze, 2016, p. 22). What the author says indicates that marriage had a dual purpose: economic reason and symbolism.

In relation to the work under analysis, the hiring of the German governess had precisely this role: to prepare the young Charles for adult life and not let him become easily attached to anyone, with the aim of marrying only a girl from a good family in the future, maintaining the intangible inheritance relating to the corresponding surname and minimizing the risk of the tangible inheritance perishing. In this balance sheet, the idea was

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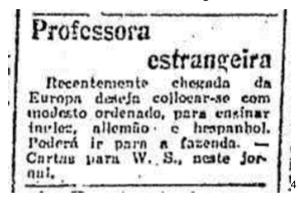
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to strengthen these assets, so that the corresponding liquidity would result in the continued prestige of the social position.

As Ritzkat (2020) explains, these educational services mentioned by Mariana Muaze were not restricted to the 19th century and continued to foster the demand for foreign preceptors with the profile necessary for the refinements and dilettante trappings of education, information corroborated by advertisements in the São Paulo press, such as the one below, from 1923, among many others that followed in the 1920s to 1940s.:

Figure 1 - Advertisement for a foreign teacher



Source: Estado de São Paulo, May 15, 1923, p. 10.

This advertisement alludes to the large circulation of foreign teachers in the capital of São Paulo, due to the need of wealthier families. However, it is worth noting what Ritzkat (2020) explained in her essay German Preceptresses in Brazil, that they were more abundant in the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century there was a sharp reduction in their numbers, as the late belle époque brought alternatives to work for foreign women other than education, a service that gradually began to be offered by religious schools.

Once these considerations have been made, it can be seen that the family represented in Amar is that of the urban São Paulo elite, highlighting the patriarchal matrix,

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⁴ It has not been possible to translate the image in order to preserve the excerpt from the original work.



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whose gender role appears well defined by traditions that even influenced legal regulations in civil matters (Saliba, 1998), which gave the man decision-making power within the family: the head of the marital partnership. This is patrio poder (Samara, 2002), a power deriving from marriage.

3 How parents thought about the education of boys and girls: notes from Amar

It is clear that Carlos' father played a leading role in resolving his son's first sexual disturbances, because he allegedly took care to keep him away from supposed adventurers - not adventures - who could eventually seduce him and lead him into a definitive union outside the pre-established standards. An act of deceit on the part of the father towards his son, due to the pact signed with the foreigner Elza. From the perspective of seeking a good future family for the son, combining the protection of property with maintaining the symbolism of intangible inheritance, the logic of the father's choice seems understandable.

In this sense, it is not surprising that the contractual agreement between Felisberto Sousa Costa and the governess forged the pseudo-pedagogy of German and piano lessons, as it referred to the secret contractual object. This raises questions such as: who, at that time and in that family situation, was actually responsible for their children's education? How did parents think about their children's education? Was conduct the same for both genders?

Samara (2002) explains that even with the transition to republican political organization in 1889, people's daily lives continued to revolve around the family. During this period, women gradually took up professional positions in pharmacies, teaching and the textile industry, and this increased throughout the 20th century, despite all the setbacks they faced because of their gender.

Thus, based on studies by Muaze (2016) and Saldanha (2005), it can be seen that the role of men remained linked to production and their presence in the public sphere, as well as their responsibility for expanding and conserving family assets, so much so that the

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Civil Code of 1916 established that it was up to them to manage their wife's interests and assets (Saliba, 1998).

What stands out in Muaze's (2016) study is that, within the family, it was the husband's responsibility to make efforts for the moral and academic education of his children, making use of his wife's support to control activity schedules, hygiene, food and daily contact with teachers and governesses. It therefore seems understandable where the search for a preceptress in Amar came from.

In the same way, the novel also reveals that Sousa Costa thought of his son's education as preparing him to make choices, even if, in the field of love, they were selective, based on the criterion of social position. The intention, in this case, was for the young man to be superficial and not attached to women who didn't belong to his social circle, but open to a union with a refined and wealthy candidate, he should live without madness and be averse to jealousy.

Traditionally, it was the families who made the choices for their children, making use of expedients and arrangements established so that exogenous marriages were carried out, observing, first and foremost, the surname and power requirements, which came from the ownership of property. Felisberto Sousa Costa had patrio poder and his initiative with regard to the education of his firstborn seems to reveal a father's love, more in the sense of preservation and zeal than love in the form of tenderness. It began with the idea of giving his son more space to make choices, even if they had some interference and supervision in the light of what the family thought was best.

It is astonishing that we are faced with a huge incongruity when we think of autonomy being regulated. However, considering that custom has always been a source for law, which can vary over time, expanding or restricting relationships, we seem to be facing a movement to expand autonomy, in a context where it is seen as important, even if it wasn't full in the Sousa Costa family. In this respect, the strangeness is somewhat diluted, since society in the years in which Amar was written was highly regulated and changes in customs were extremely slow and gradual, which brings to mind Schüler's (1992, p. 39) question: how to be free in a highly regulated environment?

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Considering the processes of change and the family arrangements of the wealthy families portrayed in the novel, as well as the attempt to understand how parents thought about education in Amar's time, it is important to remember that when we talk about the autonomy of the individual, we are also referring to the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education (Azevedo, [1932]/2010), especially since one of its banners was the autonomy of the individual. As Moacir Gadotti (2003) explains, the New School paradigm had as its pedagogical foundation the action that values the student's talents, skills and self-education, which must be instigating, so that, according to this model, education was thought of as "essentially a process and not a product; a process of reconstituting experience; a process of permanently improving individual efficiency" (Gadotti, 2003, p. 144).

Cunha (2020), in an article called A escola contra a família (The school versus the family), explains that both the school - in the broad sense, which includes preceptors - and the family gravitate around the same object: the child, and that the school has come to complement the family, either because of the lack of time or because of the parents' lack of pedagogical skills. However, as well as teaching the way and the form, having someone to teach at home distinguishes and reveals social strata, just think that in Amar, having a governess was a mark of sophistication: "- Does your mother have a governess at home? - No, why? - Nothing. [...] - Does your mother have a governess at home? - Why? - She teaches you German! - No, she's Russian. - You learn Russian from her! - Me! God forbid! - Ah" (Andrade, 1995, p. 104-105).

As seen in Andrade's idyll, education had this provocative tone of education as mere adornment. Thus, pulled by the end, the skein reveals the blasé tone that, in the novel plot, the families had with regard to education, but which is contrary to what was being ruminated by the educational thinkers of the early twentieth century, and found a place in the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education (Azevedo, 2010). For the time being, it remains to be said that, in step with modernist ideas, there were thoughts about education as a civilizing element and as a driver of the country's development in tune with Europe.

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The 1920s and 1930s were crucial for the reconstruction of the pedagogical field in our country. During these decades, not only were there several public education reforms that affected the main urban centers, but there was also a vigorous debate about the direction of elite education and popular education (Herschmann; Pereira, 1994, p. 38).

In this environment, the family and the school would be the seat of instruction at the same time, but, as Marcus Vinícius da Cunha (2020) explains, this relationship ended up becoming conflictual, to the extent that teachers, pediatricians and psychologists would have greater and better knowledge than aunts, grandmothers, fathers and mothers, and this was not limited to the 1920s, on the contrary, to this day, in education forums there is discussion about what and how to teach versus the role of the family and what the advantages of homeschooling would be.

Be that as it may, without pretending to put an end to the debate, it seems appropriate to say that the family has historically been an important element in the educational chain, but that, little by little, the responsibility for the instruction of children was relegated to specialized pedagogy, based on scientific knowledge, while the family was challenged to minimally assimilate this knowledge if it wanted to meddle in matters related to instruction, at the risk of disharmony and damage to education (Ariès, [1975]/2017; Cunha, 2020). In any case, on closer examination, it seems difficult, if not impossible, for families to take actions such as those envisioned by the school and for the school to be the institution that, alone, will resolve and provide the best result.

Returning to the sexual initiation of young Carlos in Amar, it's interesting to note that the girls didn't need this kind of care, this kind of love lesson, this warning of the dangers worrying young Carlos, because they, on the contrary, needed to marry chaste. They didn't need to be initiated due to the absolute lack of need for such a practice, stemming from the tacit and slow cultural impregnation that highlights the importance of female virginity until marriage, as Del Priore ([1997]/2017a, 2017b) and Perrot (2009, 2019) have already analyzed.

In this sense, the sexual initiation of boys through the teaching of love emerged as an alternative in Brazil, as it appears in Marioandrad's novel, considering that adolescence

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was a time of turbulence and such sinusity needed to be contained, especially in wealthy families, as a way of putting in order the "instinctive drives considered threatening" (Rago, 2008, p. 197).

Little was said about the education of girls in Amar, which seems to have been a deliberate choice on the part of the writer, as he put the spotlight of the non-school educational process solely on the male child. But it must be said that the girls, as characters, were not neglected. They were part of the family and their occasional appearances and silences also reveal a timid participation within the family.

Carlos' little sisters, Maria Luísa, Laurita and Aldinha, appear throughout the novel in scenes in which their older brother always torments them, being considered the hurtful, insensitive one towards those "more fragile" figures. A young man who is a bad example (Sagawa, 2010), representing part of the Brazilian bourgeoisie:

- Mommy! Mommy! Look at Carlos!

The boy had grabbed his sister at the mouth of the corridor. Playful, in a good mood as always. And hurtful. But he wasn't doing it on purpose, he was playing and hurting. He held Maria Luisa with his strong arms, pushed her with his chest, humming bamboleado no picadinho. She struggled, upset at finding herself so much weaker. Pushed, shaken, turned around (Andrade, 1995, p. 51).

In addition to the times when the girls were rowdy and quarrelsome, they always appeared in Amar on occasions involving music and piano lessons, outings, meals, curiosities or playing by the pergola in the house garden. This shows that, for the girls, the narrator did not indicate any element that would distance them from the normal roles socially dedicated to girls and future women: to be mothers, considering that there was a strong idea in circulation that women could not stray from their supposed natural vocation.

And speaking of spaces, we should remember that the idea of "garden" and "square", formulated by Saldanha (2005), refers to a demarcation that is not the work of chance. The square and the street are opposing spaces. The first, the public place, is for men to circulate, but also for women, as long as they are accompanied by their husbands or fathers. On the other hand, the garden is seen as an internal dependency of the house, where the women in the novel appear, except for the teacher Fräulein because, due to her

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peculiar freedom, she embodied the antithesis of the social construction of the queen of the home.

Let's also remember that, since the first great Brazilian educational law of 1827, the discourse that girls would not be able to develop as much reasoning as boys, because they were scattered and lacked good reasoning (imbecilitus sexus), gained strength. For this reason, studies should be reduced to reading, writing and performing as few mathematical operations as possible and, if parents wanted to give girls something more, it should be singing lessons or playing a musical instrument in the service of greater beauty.

These ideas in the pedagogical field continued to have an impact over time, and even spilled over into Amar's writing, demonstrating once again that women's social place was not in the public sphere, but in the private sphere, as a kind of confinement that represents the subjection and fragility imposed by culture.

3 Final thoughts

By critically reading literary works, we can also reflect on the connections between ideals of rationality for social behavior and supposed lifestyle models, as suggestions to be assimilated when reading this type of expressive trace, anchored in historical facts.

Amar is one of those works that can be studied in multiple ways, due to its various levels of complexity. Mário de Andrade's denunciation in the novel concerns the disguise of the family that is not sacred, of the son's first love, which is the result of the father's strategy, of the idyll that is not one of purity, of sexual prophylaxis that hides the real, of the anguish of the immigrant woman who, despite being cultured, subjects herself to disguise in order to survive in a distant land.

Based on this analysis, it seems safe to say that family and education have always been hotly contested spaces from the perspective of religion, power and symbology, all of which are highly entrenched in society. They are elements crossed by culture and based on symbolic forces.

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Based on the idea of representation, Amar helps us to think about the meanings given to the world and, more than that, that these meanings manifest themselves in words, speeches, images, things and practices. In this sense, the family is portrayed as one that sought to protect the estate from the young son's possible adventures; it shows that subverted education pointed to instruction as mere politeness and ornamentation: why study if young Carlos had a huge farm waiting for him?

In fact, we saw in Amar that the family didn't care about their children's education in the academic sense, nor that education was an element of personal advancement. Books were to be possessed, not read, even by the girls who, in the future, would be mere queens of their homes, not just in potential, but in actual repetition in their lives of what fatally denied their very existence as a person: freedom to make choices, including love.

Without exhausting the debate, a testimony: I heard several times from my illiterate grandmother, of Purys indigenous descent, that boys needed to "read". On the other hand, girls didn't need such knowledge to be mere housewives. Even today, some people still think this.

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