

The College of São José: catholic femaly education in the nightth century northeast

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Abstract

From the mid-nineteenth century, Brazil began to receive many European schools in its main cities. A large part of them was devoted to teaching wealthy girls. Among these schools, we highlight the College of São José, which had Italian origins and was linked to the order of Doroteias sisters that arrived in Recife in 1886, settling in the Soledade neighborhood. It was within this institution that the white Magdalena Antunes (1880-1959) studied in her younger years, from 1891 to 1896. In her mature years, she wrote a memoir and autobiographical work entitled "Oiteiro: memories of a Missy-girl" (2003) where, among other details of her life as a girl, the daughter of planters, Magdalena brought to the pages of her book records of the moment she was admitted as a student at the aforementioned school. The College of São José evidenced a pattern of female education idealized by the patriarchal society of the time, however, in another way, it allowed wealthy girls and women access to formal learning at a time when illiteracy in Brazil was quite strong, especially among the women. In this way, from an interdisciplinary methodological perspective of bibliographic and documental analysis, our work aims to bring some aspects of the history of this educational institution taking as source the aforementioned memoir in dialogue with other equally important sources such as: the enrollment books (1866-1919) and the Statutes of the College.

Keywords: College of São José, Religious female education, XIX century.

O Colégio de São José: a educação feminina católica no nordeste oitocentista

Resumo

A partir de meados do século XIX o Brasil começou a receber nas suas principais cidades muitas escolas europeias. Uma grande parte delas era destinada ao ensino de meninas abastadas. Entre estas escolas, destacamos o

Colégio de São José que tinha origem italiana sendo vinculado à ordem das irmãs doroteias que chegou a cidade do Recife, em 1886, se instalando no bairro da Soledade. Foi no âmbito desta instituição que a escritora potiguar Magdalena Antunes (1880-1959) estudou nos seus anos de juventude, entre os anos de 1891 a 1896. Em seus anos de maturidade ela escreveu uma obra de cunho memorialístico e autobiográfico intitulada “**Oiteiro**: memórias de uma Sinhá-moça” (2003) onde, entre outros detalhes de sua vida de menina filha de senhores de engenho, Magdalena trouxe para as páginas de seu livro registros do momento em que ficou internada como aluna no referido colégio. O Colégio de São José evidenciava um padrão de educação feminina idealizado pela sociedade patriarcal de então, todavia, por outra via, ele possibilitava às meninas e moças abastadas o acesso ao aprendizado formal numa época em que o analfabetismo no Brasil era bastante forte, sobretudo entre as mulheres. Dessa forma, a partir de uma perspectiva metodológica interdisciplinar de análise bibliográfica e documental o nosso trabalho tem por objetivo trazer alguns aspectos da história desta instituição de ensino tomando por fonte o livro de memórias acima citado em diálogo com outras fontes igualmente importantes tais como: os livros de matrícula (1866-1919) e os Estatutos do Colégio.

Palavras-chave: Colégio de São José, Educação feminina religiosa, Século XIX.

1 Introduction

In the year 2019 we had the opportunity to defend a doctoral thesis on the North Brazilian writer from Ceará-Mirim Magdalena Antunes (1880-1959) entitled: **With sugar, with affection**: feminine representations in the autobiographical memorialistic writing of Magdalena Antunes (1880-1959) (FARIAS, 2019) . In the middle of the process of making this work we had access to a rich source of sources about her life and work among which we can mention the book **Netting**Memories of a Sinhá-moça, which was first published in 1958. In general, the referred work is marked by a memorialistic and autobiographical bias, where the writer portrayed her experiences as a girl, daughter of the plantation owners of Ceará-Mirim/RN, in the end of the XIX century.

In her accounts of her life, Magdalena included many details of the school culture of that time, especially when she mentions her experiences at Colégio de São José in Recife, where she studied during her youth between 1891 and 1896. It is important to highlight that in the context of the 19th century, there was a progressive incidence of



European religious schools to Brazil, which happened because of the bishopric's need to bring the Brazilian people closer to the Holy See with the insertion of the ultramontane tridentine Catholicism in detriment of the Catholicism that was being practiced in the country, which was strongly marked by brotherhoods and popular practices. It would be precisely the students who had graduated from the Catholic indoctrination college who, in the near future, would transmit to their sons and daughters the teachings once learned and the Colégio de São José, which was also a reference of this educational pattern.

In this sense, from an interdisciplinary methodological perspective of bibliographic and documental analysis, the present work has as its main objective to bring aspects of the history of this educational institution. We took as sources the memoirs written by Magdalena Antunes (ANTUNES, 2003) in dialogue with other equally relevant sources we had access to in the scope of the educational institution in Recife, such as: the letters of the founder of the Congregation, the Italian Sister Paula Frassinetti (1809-1882) (FRASSINETTI, 1987a; FRASSINETTI, 1987b), the enrollment books (1866-1919), the Statutes of the School, newspapers etc.¹.

2 The Colégio de São José: The Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Dorothy in Recife

Throughout the nineteenth century, the bishops of the main Brazilian dioceses, and in particular the bishops of the dioceses of Mariana and São Paulo, were imbued with the task of implementing a reform within the Catholic Church in order to replace the traditional Luso-Brazilian Catholicism by Romanized Catholicism (AZZI, 2000). The Brazilian bishopric endeavored to introduce in the country the Tridentine and ultramontane religious ecclesial model that was being adopted in Europe throughout the pontificate of the then pope, namely: Pius IX.

¹ The documentation on the Colégio de São José used in our thesis and in this article was provided by the sisters Mércia Alves dos Santos and Gilma Souza Sales, the institution's directors, who kindly received us in July 2017, greatly contributing to the progress of our research.





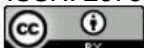
With the insertion of the new model of faith, the Brazilian Catholic leaderships also intended to put an end to the power of the laity, represented especially by the religious brotherhoods, which had been gathering the faithful in Brazil since the colonial period, especially groups linked to the Freemasons, which had already gained a lot of strength. With the implementation of the ultramontane Tridentine model, the intention of the Brazilian bishopric was to make the people more connected to the Holy See, more devoted to the Pope and consequently more obedient to his orientations.

The first nuns of the Congregation of Dorothy came to Brazil with the purpose of collaborating with the strengthening of this project, which, to a great extent, was also of interest to Pope Pius IX. After close contacts between the bishop-elect of Pernambuco, Dom Manuel do Rêgo de Medeiros, who was then residing in Rome, and the Reverend Mother General, Paula Frassinetti (1809-1882), it was decided that a house of the Institute of Saint Dorothy would be opened in Brazil. The Institute of Saint Dorothy functioned with its headquarters in Rome and already had other houses in Genoa, Bologna and Venice, which were directed by Paula Frassinetti, both through her constant visits and through the correspondence maintained with her religious sisters, to which we have had access in our research (FRASSINETTI, 1987a; FRASSINETTI, 1987b).

In her student days, Magdalena Antunes had the opportunity to contemplate the image of Paula Frassinetti on the occasion when she had to be present in the office of Anna Luccenti, a nun who then held the position of Mother Superior at St. Joseph's College. This is what Magdalena Antunes wrote in her memoirs:

The walls of the office were lined with gilded paper and decorated with views of Italy. **In the center was a beautiful canvas of Paula Frassinetti, founder of the Order**, with an inscription: 'The greatest good is to always do the will of God', even if it is contrary to our desires and demands great sacrifices from us" (ANTUNES, 2003, p. 238, our emphasis).

The objective in vogue that directly involved the congregation of Santa Doroteia was very simple: the bishop of Pernambuco intended to reform his diocese using that congregation as an element to spread the new precepts through its nuns, who, by





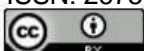
transferring the teachings to the students, would be spreading among their families a whole ideology of how to be a good Christian in the ultramontane Tridentine molds (FARIAS, 2019). The students who graduated from the Catholic school would be the future mothers who, when starting a family in the near future, would transmit to their sons and daughters the teachings once learned in their school days (FARIAS, 2019).

In 1866 the first nuns of the congregation arrived in Pernambuco after a month's journey between land and sea. Six sisters were part of the missionary group and leading them was the mother superior Teresa Casavecchia, already elderly, and as vice-superior Giuseppina Pingiani, who, according to Azzi (2000), already had extensive experience within the Congregation and who took over the discipline of French at the Recife institution. Below them, in terms of hierarchy, came Francesca Toscani and the young women who had just left the novitiate Virginia Jannozi, Gertrudes Mattei and Sofia Felipa (AZZI, 2000).

The coming of these women to install the religious congregation in Brazil was involved in many challenges, renunciations and sacrifices, including personal ones, as every missionary work was invested. During much of the trip they had to face storms on the high seas and illnesses (AZZI, 2000). In Brazil, the challenges did not cease, and the biggest problems they had to face as soon as they arrived revolved around adapting to the climate, food, habits, language, and customs of the new land, since everything was quite different from what they were used to in Europe.

In a letter written by Sister Paula Frassinetti and addressed to Sister Giuseppina Pingiani, dated April 27, 1866, it is possible to see some details regarding difficulties:

Dear Sister in the Lord I had already imagined that you were ill, and when I received the long-desired letters announcing your arrival in Pernambuco, my presentiment was confirmed, because I saw nothing from you but a little letter to your mother; and I wanted to express this fear of mine when I wrote to you on April 12, but I did not do so, thinking that you would have written to me, and you did! It is true that you will have suffered a lot, but now perhaps you will feel better, and with your stomach relieved, the change of climate will not disturb you so much. I am glad that you feel a burning desire to work for the glory of God, but remember what Fr. Gil told you so many times, that is to say, in the beginning do little and be careful; later, when you are acclimated, then you can handle a lot of work; however, for now, content yourself with learning the language of the country (FRASSINETTI, 1987a, p. 417).





It is worth noting that the health problems acquired by the nuns were also constant due to the climate, which was totally different from what they were used to, which was aggravated by the use of the black habit, typical of the congregation, which was also not suitable for the high tropical temperatures. An example of this is the case of the then Mother Superior Teresa Casavecchia, who, after falling seriously ill with tuberculosis, had to rush back to Europe in search of treatment. However, between improvements and worsening, the nun's health worsened considerably, and she died (FRASSINETTI, 1987a).

From our reading of several letters written by the Reverend Mother Paula Frassinetti, it seems to us that for these women it was necessary, in fact, to renounce themselves for a greater cause that was the glory of God that would manifest itself through the total surrender to the missionary purpose in Brazilian lands (FARIAS, 2019). All this justified, for example, submitting themselves to different inconveniences in a different country and staying away from their homelands and their families with whom they kept in touch only through letters that took months coming and going through the long Atlantic Ocean crossing (FARIAS, 2019).

3 The educational proposal of the Colégio de São José

The Colégio de São José had an educational proposal that was no different from the other Catholic schools that were founded in Brazil during the 1800s. All these institutions were imbued with the same mission: to collaborate with the implementation of a new form of Catholicism, more orthodox and clerical, distancing themselves from the model practiced in Brazil at the time (NUNES, 2013). With the end of the monarchy, this mission intensified, especially in the first decades of the twentieth century, requiring more breath of the agents involved, given that the Catholic religion broke with the State the ties of the patronage regime, which opened the doors of the nation for the foundation of Protestant schools and for the laicization of public education (FARIAS, 2019).





The Dorothean sisters dedicated themselves exclusively to the education of girls, which made them different from other congregations that settled here and that exercised the educational work associated with the work in welfare works such as asylums, orphanages and hospitals (AZZI, 2000). It is worth noting that the girls who were part of the roll of students of the institution came from families of the agrarian aristocracy and the urban middle class, among them, we must highlight the Potiguar writer Magdalena Antunes who in her childhood years studied at the Colégio de São José between the years 1891 and 1896 (FARIAS, 2019).

According to Magdalena Antunes:

The school, run by the Dorothean Sisters, was located in a majestic two-story building, painted dark red, with many windows in front, and a garden courtyard inside. It was located next to a church and a barracks, whose front overlooked the opposite street, bordering on the back with our school (ANTUNES, 2003, p. 62).

In relation to the parents of these students, what we must keep in mind is that they, through the Catholic schools, sought to illustrate their daughters in consonance with the urban and civilized world that was progressively flourishing and that saw the nuns as heralds capable of bringing to their daughters a whole repertoire of knowledge that would link them to this valued and idealized world based in Europe. Below, we present the cover of the Statutes of the Colégio de São José for the year 1928:

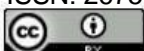


FIGURE 1 - Statutes of the Colégio de São José (cover)



SOURCE: (FARIAS, 2019, p. 194).



An important thing to note is that in order to become part of the institution as a student, the girls and young women had to pass through a selection process, that is, there were some criteria for the admission of the students that had to be strictly met:

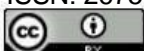
CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION

The College admits boarding students, semi-boarding students from 5 to 14 years old, and external students. Enrollment Period. Registration takes place in January. Older students must register by January 15 of each year. After this date, the Director does not guarantee their place. Upon entry: a) - Baptismal certificate. b) Birth certificate. c) Vaccination certificate. d) - If coming from another school, a certificate of good conduct. It is required the greatest punctuality in the entrance of the students (ESTATUDOS DO COLÉGIO DE SÃO JOSÉ, 1928, p. 3; our emphasis).

Consulting the enrollment book of the institution we had the opportunity to observe, among other details, the origin of the students who enrolled in the Colégio de São José. The girls were admitted to the institution between the ages of five and fourteen, coming from different parts of the country, especially from the North and Northeast. This may denote the economic prosperity of these regions, especially with regard to sugar, cocoa and tobacco production in the Northeast and rubber extraction in the North at that time.

The boarding schools were the heirs of the monastic societies of the medieval period and followed an ecclesiastical format of living and of training men and women. This format, apparently, pleased the Brazilian elites who could afford it, as was the case of Mr. José Antunes de Oliveira, who kept his two daughters, Magdalena Antunes and Etelvina Antunes in the Colégio de São José. Besides these we can also mention the case of the writer Auta de Souza (1876-1901) who also studied under the boarding school regime in the São Vicente de Paula College in Recife between the years 1888 and 1890 (FARIAS, 2013, 2018), (GOMES, 2013). About boarding schools, José Gimeno Sacristán wrote:

The boarding school is the formula of institutionalization of the life of minors and young people in which education is established as a system and a formula of life for extended times and that welcomes the subject in its entirety, producing a great impact on all their personal dimensions: body, sociability, morality, sexuality, learning of cultural contents... They are spaces of life, surveillance, control and





education separated from the family and isolated from social activities (SACRISTÁN, 2005, p. 134-135).

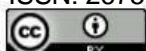
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In a certain measure, the Catholic schools filled the gaps left by the official educational project of the empire that, although officially it intended to cover the whole territory as stated in the imperial law of October 15, 1827 (BRASIL, 1827), in practice it could not meet the educational demand of the country. Another thing that becomes clear is that, even though the proposal of the college was loaded by the conservative spirit of the projects in vogue at the time, which legitimated the place of women in the domestic sphere, in fact it opened the possibility for girls and young women, especially from interior regions as was the case of Magdalena Antunes, Auta de Souza and many others to have access to formal education (FARIAS, 2019).

It is important to highlight that in addition to the difficulties of the education system of the time in covering the entire nation, there were cultural obstacles that limited girls from accessing the studies. Many parents did not see the usefulness in the process of broadening the culture of their daughters, some even thought it was a waste of money (FARIAS, 2019). In her memoir Magdalena Antunes portrayed the thought of the time by bringing to the pages of her Oiteiro (2003) the figure of Amaro who was her father's cousin. Thus she wrote:

My father welcomed him more out of complacency than friendship, for he did not like his opinions, nor the irony that sparked on his lips at every word. **He thought that women should not be educated, that the more ignorant they were, the happier they would be, while all knowledge for men would be too little.** I thought my father should save for the future the money he was going to spend on me at school; in the future only the money would be worth it (ANTUNES, 2003, p. 167, our emphasis).

Against this thought that saw female education as a burden to the family, the Potiguar writer Nísia Floresta (1810-1895) wrote a vast work defending the need for women to have access to formal education and even founded a school for girls in Rio de Janeiro in 1838, the Augusto School (JOTA, MEDEIROS NETA, MEDEIROS, 2020). According to (JOTA, MEDEIROS NETA, MEDEIROS, 2020) the school founded and





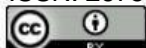
directed by Nísia Floresta had an innovative educational proposal for the time, especially by offering girls the same content that was taught to boys at the time. Thus:

For Nísia Floresta, the education of women should be equated to that of men, since in no way were their cognitive aspects different. Therefore, there was no reason for the education of women to be neglected. All this, it seems, was put into practice with her students. Striving for them to learn and be at the same level as men (JOTA, MEDEIROS NETA, MEDEIROS, 2020, p. 9-10).

Unlike the curricular proposal of Augusto's School, São José School had a curriculum entirely focused on the social gender expectations for women in that context. It is important to emphasize that the educational proposal of the religious schools in the 1800s did not seek to bring women closer to men in terms of learning to act in the world of public work, but it was also not only about literacy and endowing these girls with rudimentary notions of mathematics and other subjects, but also about endowing them with knowledge that in itself was defining social distinction. Thus wrote Riolando Azzi:

It was about preparing the girls for their progressive insertion into urban society, guided by bourgeois standards of behavior. In this new context, women acquired a new social status; they had to distinguish themselves by the finesse of their manners, by their artistic skills in terms of music and literature, thus shining in family gatherings and soirees. In the game of matrimonial exchange of the time, her value was no longer measured by the economic contribution she brought by her dowry, or by the predisposition for a fruitful maternity, but by the ability of the girl to act within the new social context, marked increasingly by European influence (AZZI, 2002, p. 22).

These were exactly the expectations that revolved around the girls and young women when they returned to their homes, i.e., they should reflect to their families and, especially, to their parents' friends and other relations, the symbols of this civilized urban life that took Europe as a model. They should reflect the civilizing process experienced by the main European cities (ELIAS, 1994). It was expected from them that a whole set of knowledge had been incorporated in the boarding schools, since this acquired luster would guarantee success in the "matrimonial market", as Riolando Azzi (2002) pointed out.



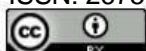


The European influence, especially the French one, was present in different aspects of the daily life of the big Brazilian cities. Cities such as Rio de Janeiro and Recife underwent structural reforms in their urban spaces, especially in their downtown areas, in the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century, taking as a model the reforms implemented in Paris by the urban planner Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809-1891) as stated Raimundo Arrais (2004).

The influence of the Parisian urban reforms was visible in Brazil on the layout of the streets that were reformed and widened, the so-called boulevards, in the construction of squares, parks and gardens, as well as in the implementation of a public transportation system such as the animal-drawn and later electric tramway (QUINTAS, 2008). Some neighborhoods were entirely demolished, giving way to tree-lined streets supported by a lighting system, thus conforming to the then ideal of modernity imported from Paris. The historian Raimundo Arrais talked about this reality in relation to the city of Recife:

The image of the *American Venice* adhered easily to the representations about the city, because, besides flattering the pride of Recife, it had in its favor the fact that it expressed the balance in which the first aspect highlighted was the harmony between nature and technique, evident in the symbols that represented the city: the bridges projected over large expanses of water, the harmonious houses lined up on the river bank, on Rua da Aurora, receiving in that line of houses and public buildings an excellent plastic effect by the frontal illumination of the sun's morning rays on its walls erected in the inspiration of an imperial classicism that had absorbed architectural traces of the Italian Renaissance, thus inviting analogy with the mother Venice, the European Venice (ARRAIS, 2004, p. 185; emphasis added).

Fashion itself suffered the Parisian influence, from where a whole assortment of clothes and accessories arrived, via steamships. The clothing of Brazilian women and men was widely modified in this context, which began to incorporate the daily use of hats, top hats, umbrellas, fabrics, perfumes, shoes, silk dresses, in addition to medicines, elixirs, drinks, stationery and treasury in general. In the *Diário de Pernambuco* newspaper of that time, the list of products being advertised is immense, which could be found by customers in the main stores in downtown Recife .



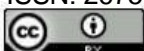


Magdalena Antunes narrated an episode of her life in which she showed the influence of the European fashion in her clothes and in her habits as a girl who changed into a young woman. When she returned to Ceará-Mirim to spend the vacations with her parents after three years of boarding school, Magdalena and her brothers were received with a party in the family's house in the center of the city, a moment for which she prepared herself: "I also started in the train to make up pretty sentences to say when I got home, from where I had left a girl of eleven years old and returned a slender young lady, knowing how to read and write" (ANTUNES, 2003, p. 184-185).

The writer narrated that this was a moment packed with music played on the piano, string instruments, and watered with food and drinks, in which she and her siblings became the target of the gaze of her parents' guests who were connected to the sugarcane aristocracy of the Ceará-Mirim region. Magdalena Antunes wrote: "The sobrado was vibrant with joy. All our countrymen took part in the event of a family celebrating the arrival of their four children from school" (ANTUNES, 2003, p. 192).

The girl Magdalena Antunes presented herself to the guests finely dressed, vainly wearing high-heeled shoes and a hairstyle that was the latest fashion in Recife, the so-called *bendegó* hairstyle, a name that, according to Magdalena herself in her memoirs, referred to the meteorite that fell in Bahia at the end of the 18th century. About the repercussion of her hairstyle in the city she wrote: "And when the news spread among my little friends, they would ask me what kind of weird truncated hair was that and where I got that hairdo!" (ANTUNES, 2003, p. 184).

The sociologist Gilberto Freyre in *Modos de homem e modas de mulher* (FREYRE, 2009) pointed fashion and Brazilian customs related to clothing as objects of study in a pioneering way. From consulting a wide variety of sources, including periodicals, the author showed that clothing and gestures were directly linked to a particular group and, based on what they wore and how they behaved, they demonstrated a vision of themselves and the world, recognizing themselves and producing distinctions in relation to others.





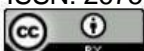
In relation to this reality, the confessional Catholic schools had a lot of strength because they collaborated, to a great extent, in the formation of social distinctions, especially among women. As we have seen before, the education proposed by Colégio de São José articulated two important and valued points by the group it contemplated at that time: the Catholic formation, within the ultramontane and tridentine viewpoint, and a cultural formation that invested the woman with ornaments, among which the ability to play the piano, so that she would be in line with the country that was modernizing itself..

At *Vida in Brazil in the mid-nineteenth century* (2008), Gilberto Freyre, portrayed the incidence of boarding schools run by European nuns in the main cities of Brazil. According to him, this fashion lasted throughout the 19th century among girls from wealthy families:

At the age of eight or nine, the girl from the most opulent patriarchal family was sent to a religious boarding school, where she stayed until she was thirteen or fourteen. There, her education, begun at home, continued. She learned the delicate art of being a woman. Music, dance, embroidery, prayers, French and sometimes English, a light ballast of literature were the elements of a girl's education in a boarding school. She would come back very romantic, sometimes a charming little creature, reading Sue, Dumas, and George Sand, as well as savoring pamphlets, sometimes mellifluous, almost always delicately erotic, published then by the main newspapers of the Empire for their female audience. She knew how to pray. She knew how to dance. The dances of the time were the quadrille, the lancers and the polka. To dance them well, to be light as a feather and as fine as a silk ribbon, was the highest ideal of a girl (FREYRE, 2008, p. 95).

In this sense, much more than the money that would be invested in the education of girls and young women, what was at stake was the production of a habitus whose concept, for Pierre Bourdieu (2014) is about the main characteristics that give meaning to the existence of a group marking it and distinguishing it from other groups in society. In other words, the Colégio de São José, like the other Catholic indoctrination schools focused on female education in the 1800s, intended to produce devout Catholic elite women, possessing skills, talents and prepared for marriage.

All this repertoire of knowledge should be easily identified in the bodies of the daughters of men and women from social classes that had enough money to keep their daughters as students in these institutions. In order to reach a high level of refinement on





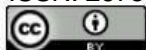
the part of the women, a great effort was spent at the boarding school; the bodies and also the minds of the students were disciplined by the rigorous teaching methodology adopted by the Catholic schools that were being founded in Brazil from the middle of the 19th century, among which the Colégio de São José in Recife, where Magdalena Antunes studied.

4 Final considerations

By following the paths taken by Magdalena Antunes, it was possible, among many other aspects of the 19th century Brazilian culture and society, to know a little about the history of the catholic feminine education of those years. From the access we had to her memoir and from the contact with sources produced by the Colégio de São José in Recife, it was possible to bring as a central objective of this article some lines about the history of this educational institution.

Although we had access to a rich collection in the school in Recife that allowed us to know the history of the Colégio de São José, it was the book Oiteiro (2003) by Magdalena Antunes that allowed us to see details of the school daily life, details of the regiment, information about the subjects offered in the curriculum, the mothers responsible for each subject, the spaces, the books read by the students, the timetables, how the relations between the nuns and the students were, as well as the rituals and events of the institution that are finely discussed by Magdalena Antunes in her autobiography. However, all this is repertory for a future work.

The book **Netting** (2003) in dialogue with the other sources mentioned throughout this article allowed us to produce a scenario that served as a backdrop for us to learn more about the performance of women nuns in favor of the dissemination in Brazil of what was understood as civility and the formation of a differentiated habitus among Brazilian girls and young women of that time. That is, the education proposed by that religious congregation aimed to go beyond what was thought as education for the country by the public authorities.



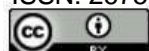


As previously mentioned, the Colégio de São José was linked to an education project carried out by the Catholic Church in our country in the late 19th century. The institution articulated a program of studies that united a set of devotional practices linked to the Tridentine ultramontane Catholicism in association with a wide repertoire of knowledge that should make the girls and young women shine in the salons and in society. Devout and refined, they were prepared for social interaction in a country that was modernizing itself, having Europe, and especially France, as a reference.

Although the institution reaffirmed the ideals of an education that told women that their place was in the world of domesticity. The Colégio de São José, like other religious schools, allowed Brazilian girls and young women, especially those from the interior, to have access to the world of knowledge to the detriment of others who, unfortunately, were limited by the culture of their parents who did not see the education of their daughters as a priority or by the state of public education in the empire that could not reach all the population efficiently.

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