

## **CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION WITHIN THE PROCESS OF PORTUGUESE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIZATION**

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In this essay we propose to discuss paths taken upon the educational ideal of citizenship, (albeit not being employed these specific terms) pedagogical debate and thought occurring in Portugal in the latter part of the nineteen sixties, and throughout the nineteen seventies. This happening in the context of a country dominated by the final breaths of a dying dictatorship, along with the political turmoil in and surrounding the construction of a democratic society; thus implying a necessity for educating the Portuguese people in exercising their role as citizens in a conscientious manner. The same was implied in terms of their having a critical and active participation in social affairs.

The post-revolutionary era (proceeding the revolution on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1974) in particular was when the issues of democratising education and teaching, for a democratic life, were placed centre on the educational agenda. At that period of time, the influence exerted by author Rui Grácio (1921 – 1991) was one of paramount importance by means of his thoughts and actions on the matter. Besides giving rise to some of the most significant experiences in the field, he constantly reflected though out his work as a pedagogue on the relationship between education, democracy, and citizenship. The generation, governing educational policies during the country's transition to democracy, turned the man into a cardinal and pivotal reference.

### **Rui Grácio: a biographical overview**

Rui Grácio was born in Lourenço Marques (now known as Maputo), in a former Portuguese colony - Mozambique. Having concluded his final thesis at the University of Coimbra, in Portugal, he attained his degree in Philosophy / History from the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Lisbon (1947). He participated in movements opposing Salazar's dictatorship, which eventually led to a period of incarceration. He taught History and Philosophy from 1947 to 1972, at the French High-School – Charles Lepierre (in Lisbon). In addition, from 1960 henceforth, he was an active investigator for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, an occupation he would dedicate himself to full-time in 1972 and onward. During the final stages of the Salazar's dictatorial regime, he collaborated in the project developed within the Reform of Veiga Simão, the Minister of Education during the latter part of the regime. This was to implement the experimental 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> years in the Portuguese Educational. Also during this time, he participated in the preparatory reunions for the founding of the Socialist Party in Portugal. He would later disconnect himself to this party in 1976. Between July 1974 and July 1975, he was Secretary of State for

Pedagogical Orientation, in function to three provisional governments, proceeding the country's April 25<sup>th</sup> revolution. He was author to an abundant bibliography, a vast array with reference to various areas of Pedagogical Science. At first his doctrinal sources were well within the realm of the New Education. Later, they mirrored aspects of other currents in vogue throughout the remainder of his life, such as: Non-Directive Pedagogy and Institutional Pedagogy. As a matter of fact, he based the development and performance of various different experimental courses in Teacher Training on the above mentioned doctrinal sources (Fernandes, 1995).

### **Education, a form of Provocation, Promotion, and Emancipation**

The word citizenship scarcely appears in works written by Rui Grácio. One example of its appearance is when he considers as an “imperative for an invigorated citizenship” (Grácio, 1978/1995a, I, pg.391) to critically review Portuguese social life. The term citizen(s) is more readily found. One instance of its appearance is when he takes into consideration that the system of democracy “demands its citizens to act in a well informed, critical, active, and responsible manner” (Grácio, 1978/1995b, I pg.374). This also happens with the word civic, applied often as can be seen in his work when he deals with the notion of: “civic association or militancy” being essential to the awakening of the democratic conscience (Grácio, 1978/1995a, I, pg. 369). One of the innovating areas particularly pleasing to Rui Grácio, in the curriculum of the new *Unified Secondary School*, was labelled as *Civic Polytechnic Education*.

The actual wording, *Citizenship Education*, had not yet entered into the specialised discourse regarding Education. Nevertheless it is ever present in Rui Grácio's pedagogic ideology, at least in terms of some of its presently defined meaning. More than, and going to, the reason underlying the previous quoting of the author; this defends the maxim of – participation as a right and an indeclinable duty for citizenship. Only through the participation of citizens would it become possible to achieve the aforesaid project of – “a democratic and socialist society” (Rui Grácio, 1978/1995b, I, pg. 373), one that inkeeping with the spirit of that era in Portuguese history, Rui Grácio sought after and desired.

In a work written by him in 1963, with its meaningful title “To Educate: to promote, to emancipate”, the author questions himself on what the school's role should be. The most obvious answer is that it serves in teaching younger generations “to assimilate a certain number of intellectual techniques” and “ a certain degree of knowledge on matters of a varied nature”. But not being suffice, he goes on to state that it's ones hope that schooling should principally contribute to “spiritual development”, and the mobilising of “the totality of the person”. He further continues that this, together with the teaching of “working methods”, should create “habits of autonomous thinking”, and the awakening of “intelligence along with the capability of being sensitive to cultural values”(Grácio, 1963/1995, I, pg. 120).

From the example of moments in “orchestrated insubordination” by students along with the roles played by the young *leaders*, whom were subsequently punished, Rui Grácio finds himself questioning whether they weren't in fact personifying “an exercise in emancipation; a moment promoting a path towards maturity and autonomy”. To him this is the “ultimate objective of Education”, insofar as it should promote “an opportune transfer of initiatives and responsibilities unto the student. Considering the student to be “the totality of the person”(Grácio, 1963/1995, I, pg.

123). As duly noted by Fernandes (1995), Rui Grácio's pedagogy "is in truth a pedagogy of emancipation" (pg. XLVI). Other than the school being attributed with the role of a potential liberator, in contrast to its reproductive ability (one that is emphasised by the author), the previously mentioned writings also show us a characteristic humanist quality in Rui Grácio's pedagogic thought. It is one, which shines the spotlight on the dignity attributed to a human person, thus making it a central issue.

During a public gathering in 1978, Rui Grácio further adds to the formula (developed 15 years beforehand), and tries to make explicit the notions at issue therein. He verbalised the following:

To promote means, to move ahead. To emancipated means, to remove out from under our hand. The practice or rather, my own teaching practice has led me to alter this enunciation. It adds something to it. Not only does educating serve to promote and emancipate, it serves to provoke, to promote, and to emancipate...

By provocation I refer to what is appealed to in a person, to somewhat shake him/her up and might I add, slightly disrupt the person by removing him/her from his/her usual conditioning habits. By habits, I refer to those in which one chooses to anchor oneself upon, a safe haven. To me, all these previously mentioned issues seem to give the necessary means for awakening their consciences unto a certain number of things, thus empowering the teacher to promote ... and emancipate them. (Grácio, 1978/1996, III, pg. 221)

During a debate that occurred after the above mentioned conference, one of the participants asked Rui Grácio to clarify his concept and usage of promotion by querying: – promotion in what sense (to what gain)? Which received with the following reply: - "This is a question that any and all educators, not only those that are conscientious, but those with conscience, should make". He then seizes the moment to address one of the classic paradoxes in Education. That the teacher ought to educate with "a particular objective in mind", founded on his/her own "set of values". This necessity comes from the authenticity – well within a *Rogerian* context – that should characterise pedagogic activity. If the teacher "does not conduct his teaching within the realm of his own authenticity", or in other words "if the teacher's purpose isn't, other than developing children, one of developing himself; then he is not teaching. Moreover, a person teaches only to the degree of that person's *being* in terms of his *authenticity*" (Grácio, 1978/1996, III, pg. 253).

This does not on any account mean that the teacher has the legitimacy to turn his pupils into "people subdued by the alleged model of what their teacher ought to be". The teacher should promote, and through the heeding of his own set of axioms should be charged with the duty to "respect the person along with their personal path in life". Only at the hand of respect is it possible to emancipate a student. Thus the pertinence in combining the two elements: that of promoting and that of emancipating" (Grácio, 1978/1996, III, pg. 253). The author later goes on to state: "Masters are those that nurture, or set free their disciples' autonomous nature" (Grácio, 1982/1996, III, pg. 297). To conclude this topic, we echo Pacheco (1999), by asserting that "his trilogy: to provoke, to promote, and to emancipate – signifies *an education in and for citizenship*" (pg. 179)

## **Civic Participation And Opening The School To The Community**

The revolution on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1974 rendered profound transformations upon the sum of Portuguese society. One of the realms where major changes could be seen was Education. The reinstating of fundamental rights, for the individual and the citizen, was exuberantly celebrated in all public and private locations. The revolution was in the streets and in the schools.

During the complex situation found in the country between the years 1974 and 1976, two projects for or models of society were drafted: a collectivist model – sprung from revolutionary legitimacy, and the democratic model – based upon electoral legitimacy. In political discourse and educational debates respectively, the top priority lay in democratising the System and destroying the inherent structures of the Salazar regime.

Seen in this light, Rui Grácio's performance is of paramount importance. The influence exerted by his thoughts and actions goes beyond this era, leaving its imprint on the process of Portuguese social and educational democratisation.

The weight given to political objectives on the relationship between school and society exposes the priority of democratising the country, as a project encompassing the future (with a Socialist outlook); it also reveals the position of Education and pedagogical practice within this context. – Democratising Education is feasible only through the democratising of Portuguese society moreover, students should be taught in their schools to participate in the task of said democratisation, and also be taught to consciously exercise their citizenry. It is in this sense that Grácio perceives, civic participation by citizens. He acknowledges it to be – “voluntary and active participation in one or in a multiple of organs that interpret, represent, and promote their aspirations and interests” (Grácio, 1968/1995, I pg.243) – having sights set on developing the country as well as democratising Education.

Civic dimension, and scope, is one of the fundamental issues for concern during the transformations that occurred in the following two years of post-revolutionary Portugal (after April 25, 1974). They were presumed to contribute to “the educating of youths in schools by implication, inferred through transformational intervention upon the community at hand, applying the creative juices therein in a generous and open fashion” (Grácio, 1977/1995, II, pg. 445). The dimension and scope afore mentioned are clearly present in *Civic Polytechnic Education*. They were also incorporated into other pedagogic innovations and experiments. Standing out from the list of such innovations and experimentation are the *Student Civic Service*, *Contact Activities*, and the democratic management of schools. At that time these initiatives were emblematic: promoting ties between school and society, opening schools up to the community.

The creating of a unified, secondary school education, in 1975, was “the cardinal rupture to be seen in the Educational System's structure”(Gaspar, 2001, pg. 47). The main architect for this breach was Rui Grácio. There was hope that this project would help surpass “the pedagogic configurations and social functions” of the two forms of schools existent up to then. The two forms of schools being High School (school for “academic and encyclopaedic knowledge divorced from its society – hence lacking in social function”)and Technical Schools (school types connoted to teach “utilitarian know how – thus in want of proper scientific and theoretic background”). These same school types were to converge and become one. One of the cardinal instruments in the democratising of the educational system, in the 1974-

1976 era, was worthy of note. – This being, the creating of a single and common Secondary School Educational, by which “the hereto existing parallel school types, high schools and technical schools, of unequal social acceptance and prestige were extinguished”(Grácio, 1975/1995, II, pgs. 408-409). .

In terms of a single bodied Secondary School Education, the opening up of schools unto their community and their contextual environments was achieved through the organising of said education’s curricula (curricula for a *Civic Polytechnic Education*). For Rui Grácio (1985/1995) “the intertwining of the two worlds (scholastic and communal) initially depends on conjoint initiatives performed by both. The school system seemed to have “a special vocation in exercising said initiatives and activities for Civic Polytechnic Education (II, pg. 501). Grácio presents this new interdisciplinary mode as a substantial factor for transforming education at this level. Its inclusion into the structure of this new education implied the executing of productive work and the obtaining of close ties between schools and their respective communities. Implicit to this new mode were:

Four explicit objectives, that I believe to be capable of being grouped and organised with basis on two governing principals. – One being regional/communal insertion of schools. (With hopes of winning youths over to the cause of solving problems of national interest by use of their active participation and answering to the problems and worries of their communities at hand). The other being – partnership between studies and productive work, and thus reinforcing the school’s social function. (Grácio, 1977/1995, II, pg. 444)

Occupying only one morning or afternoon per week the *Civic Polytechnic Education* did not have a predefined program or curricula, but rather it provided orientation for teachers in what activities to develop with their pupils. Therefore the learning process would come about through certain situations, problems, and elaboration of projects. From evaluating this experience, its potential is revealed. It also reveals how such proposed innovation was accomplished, and how it was reached/maintained – more in terms of content than that of methodology. Thus showing the difficulties in adapting new models to educational work (Bettencourt, 2001).

The *Civic Polytechnic Education* acted only within the 7<sup>th</sup> year of *The Unified Secondary School* education, during 1975/76, it having been suspended in September 1976. This short lasting experience was variegated with respect to the particular characteristics and capabilities of each school in question. Noteworthy is the fact of the *Civic Polytechnic Education*’s setting forth components for school programming in the years to follow (i.e. *Área Escola* and *Área do Projecto*). Also notable was the fact of there actually having been taught Education for *A Democratic Citizenship*. The *Civic Polytechnic Education* clearly possessed the dimension and scope of *Citizenship Education*, as thought of by today’s standard; having helped students improve their capacity in problem making, their critical interpreting, and to intervene responsibly in social and cultural spheres.

Concern for the *Educating for a Democracy* (or *Citizenship Education*) was also present in the *Student Civic Service*. This was a sphere where students between Secondary Education and University, developed activities to execute within the communities. Within the realm of the community’s labour activities, such as healthcare institutions, etc., and its social, cultural, and educational realms, they came

into contact with the country's problems and collaborated in the tasks of building a democracy.

The democratic management of School Institutions was also an emblematic project in showing the principles behind the democratisation of the society. Schools were the places where the interests of three communities as such (scholastic, local, and national) were conveyed. There was a desire to establish an equilibrium between the three and to find ways for "the social managing of schools" (Grácio, 1975/1995, II, pg. 417) by using teacher, pupil, parent, and worker alike. Rui Grácio (1982/1996), co-author to the legal diploma regarding the democratic management of the public learning institutions in Portugal, attributed great importance to the matter. It was deemed important due to the consolidating of a democratic life within schools, and for student development (taking into consideration concerns of a social nature). Democratic management impressed a strong sense of autonomy in educational institutions and the teachers thereof – a necessary condition for the development of personally autonomous, and socially intervening students.

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