

Dialogue with Jorge Correia Jesuíno¹

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To contribute to the discussion regarding the challenges facing **Education** and **Culture** today in terms of either permanence or change in representations or social practices during times of crisis, or both, we interviewed Prof. Jorge Correia Jesuíno, on July 15, 2021. We are deeply grateful to him for the dialogue and exchanges of undeniable interest that go beyond the academic field. To address this issue, we examine matters relevant to the context of political, sociocultural, and economic transformations, which occur in such complex and challenging times of neoliberalism and pandemic in the world and, in particular, in Brazil. In the Brazilian context, the pandemic, which is caused by the new coronavirus and has taken many lives, exacerbates social suffering, especially because of the ideological war propagated by the Jair Bolsonaro administration, which denies knowledge and rejects creating public policies to solve the problems that affect the various areas of action of the State. And in the field of Education, we have a severe problem, which is compounded with the risks experienced with the recent rise in abandonment and dropout rates.

Many of our children and youth living in the neediest classes and attending public schools, whether state or municipal, have experienced extreme inequality since 2020. Currently, moving opposite to what we want, we are also seeing corporate groups and military groups controlling the Education of the popular classes, further deepening the existing system of exclusion through the creation of digital platforms and their respective technological tools, without providing adequate access to these students. Additionally, due

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to the migration of classes from face-to-face to virtual education, a whole digital culture has impacted the schooling practices of teachers and other education professionals, pushing them toward remote education, causing changes in instruction practices, and above all, in school culture and professional culture.

Therefore, we raised questions to look at Education and Culture from a psychosocial perspective, considering three major thematic axes, which are related to the purpose of this Dossier: *Education and school culture* in a scenario of uncertainty caused by the political crisis and pandemic; *education and digital culture* in the context of changes, which involves issues of relationships and behavior in virtual environments, putting the issue of social violence on the agenda; and *education and professional culture* nowadays, in the face of multiple challenges, among which either public educational or teacher training policies, or both, virtual daily life, curricular organization, and teacher professionalism and its implications.

In the interrelationship of these thematic axes, to consider *social* and, yet more importantly, *psychosocial* dynamics and their cycles of either stability or change of social productions, influences, adaptations or resistances to ideological and political pressures, we take up, in particular, the approximations between two thinkers, Bourdieu and Moscovici, as we have done in our “Rio Group”³, since 2013, and in the various productions that have already been released (ABDALLA; DOMINGOS SOBRINHO; CAMPOS, 2018; ABDALLA, 2019), among others.

Considering the *propositions* and *concerns* described here, and especially their *experiences* in the field of Social Psychology and Social Representations, also keeping in mind that book “Social Representations in Changing Societies” that you organized, Prof. Jesuíno, in co-authorship with Professors Felismina R. P. Mendes and Manuel José Lopes, and, in particular, your Introduction (JESUÍNO, 2015), we can move on to our dialogue.

MFBA - Throughout your career in research, you have been devoted to producing knowledge in the area of Social Psychology, particularly in the field of Social Representations Theory (JESUÍNO, 1997a, 1997b, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019). And,

³ The “Rio Group” (RG) was so called, as our interviewee mentioned, with “an innocent and slightly ironic designation that evolved from a challenge initially proposed by Moisés Sobrinho [...] aiming to establish bridges between Serge Moscovici and Pierre Bourdieu [...]” (JESUÍNO, 2019, p. 7). After three round tables (EDUCERE, 2013; JIRS, 2013; CIRS/SP, 2014), the RG is constituted by a group of researchers who organized two Seminars: The first held, under the baton of our late Moisés, in Natal/RN (2014), and the second, in Rio de Janeiro/RJ, 2015, organized by Pedro Humberto Faria Campos and Rita de Cássia Pereira Lima.

based on your production and experiences, and reflecting on this current moment, with the arrival of Covid-19, I ask you: What are your views on this phenomenon of ignorance and disinformation in the current context, especially in Brazil, with this process of denialism in which the propagation of disinformation seems to be not just official discourse but, above all, state policy?

JCJ - I think that fake, distorted, manipulated news has always been around, but now, with the new digital media, it has become more frequent and more worrying. "Fake news", if I am not mistaken, is a "Newspeak⁴" expression, and it had to be in English, introduced by President Donald Trump, to accuse the media of disseminating information, which, according to him, distorted the facts and intentions related to his administration. However, he himself manipulated the information he posted on social networks. That having been said, my contention is that the political game has always been fueled by attributions of intent and conspiracy theories between governments and opposition parties. By densifying communication links, shortening space, and accelerating change, these processes have gained new momentum. Network scholars are interested in the consequences of this quantitative change. While it is true that we have more information, it is also true that the level of noise has increased, perhaps in a greater relative proportion. In addition, it is possible that the accumulation of data by digital platforms will not end up leading to a dystopian "society of surveillance" where citizens' behavior is systematically controlled. We currently live under a regime that has already been called an infodemic, of excess, and not of a lack of information. During a conference I attended in Lisbon, in the 1980s, Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon told us that the problem in the future would not be a scarcity of information, but a scarcity of attention spans, or, to put it differently, of our ability to process it. This is perhaps one of the challenges we face as teachers: To help young people to establish new strategies and heuristics to face this brave new world.

MFBA - Absolutely, Prof. Jesuíno, there was a substantial increase in information related to the Covid-19 outbreak, as well as "fake news", misinformation, and rumors here in Brazil... And, in this sense, "conspiracy theories" are more than alive, as we are all involved in a constant state of fear, anxiety, and distrust with today's sociopolitical situation and

⁴*Newspeak, newtalk or new language*, in the book "1984," by George Orwell (2009), is a fictitious language created by an authoritarian government with the aim of restricting the possibilities of reasoning and controlling people's thinking, preventing undesirable ideas from emerging.

pandemic and infodemic context. As Jolley *et al.* (2017, p. 19) explained, “conspiracy theories, therefore, serve to defend the system when its legitimacy is threatened⁵” (free translation). In this way, the *conspiracy myth* is handing out the cards in our game of life, and, contrary to this process, as Bourdieu would say (1996, p. 332), “science can do nothing more than try to establish the truth of these struggles for truth and to apprehend the objective logic, according to which stakes and fields, strategies and victories are determined...”. Could you please elaborate on that a bit more?

JCJ - There is nothing new about conspiracy theories, which are also frequently invoked today. The article he cites is an example of a type of literature that today includes dozens and dozens of titles, such is the interest that this phenomenon arouses both among philosophers and, naturally, in the social studies. We actually have encyclopedic works on this topic. Carl Graumann and Serge Moscovici published, in 1987, a collective work called “Changing Conceptions of Conspiracy”. In the “The Conspiracy Mentality” chapter, SM asserts, in the wake of Nietzsche and Scheler, that *resentment* is at the base of attributing malevolent intentions to minorities, considered anomic. Social psychologists are familiar with this process from theories of causal attribution. Twenty years later, SM became interested in the subject again in a conference that he ended up not delivering in Rome, in 2006, the text of which was only very recently published, in 2020. The title “*Why are theories of conspiracy so popular*”, or rather, “Reflections on the Popularity of ‘Conspiracy Mentalities’” (MOSCOVICI, 2020), is already revealing of the spread the phenomenon, which, however, continued to grow to become a hegemonic social representation. SM anchors conspiracy theories in “magical thinking” – “everything can be used as an explanation, and everything can be explained”. The phenomenon acquires new dynamics with the emergence of denialism, first with regard to climate change and, even more recently, with regard to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is yet another psychocultural process that justifies deeper analysis, especially in assessing the interrelationships between science, politics, and common sense. Also, the “social construction of reality” paradigm, which has stirred so much enthusiasm, and still represents a large part of the social sciences model, will be no less complicit in the exercise of systematic suspicion, requiring a deconstructive view of first order reality. Is not Pierre Bourdieu's notion of habitus, which the Professor is familiar with, indicative of this hermeneutic of suspicion? But we

⁵ When the legitimacy of the social system is threatened, conspiracy theories appear to be used as a form of defense (JOLLEY, DOUGLAS; SUTTON, 2017, p. 19).

can go back even further, to Karl Popper, who, in a conference he gave in 1948, associated conspiracy theories with the unforeseen consequences of social and technological advancement itself. He argued that the social sciences must foresee such "perverse effects", a term that has become enshrined in French literature thanks to Raymond Boudon, the sociologist who most explored this field. In this sense of Hegelian flavor, we would have conspiracy without a conspirator. Popper asserts that Karl Marx admitted it.

MFBA – Regarding your question, Prof. Jesuíno, related to the Bourdieusian notion of *habitus*, as illustrative of this hermeneutic of suspicion, it could be considered so. Especially considering that the notion of *habitus* undergoes constant reformulations, not only as a conceptual instrument, but as either “characters” or “incorporated structures” of the agents in relation to the “objective structures,” in the relations of force and struggle in the different social fields. This means, according to Bourdieu (1998a, p. 113), that the social agent has a need to “make people see and believe, to make known and to make them recognize [...]”, to realize “the meaning and the consensus on the meaning” (p. 113). Today, such senses are under suspicion, because we are all more skeptical of both the present and the future, more critical, more anxious and, above all, more disbelievers of what may come to be. With our context in mind, distrust and disbelief have to do especially with this right-wing, neoliberal “conservative wave”, which has been “misruling”, which denies scientific and political achievements and threatens, with the fabrication of “fake news”, the democratic pact that had been upheld in the 1988 Constitution. It further accentuates economic, social, cultural, health, and education issues. The pandemic only worsened what we already had before. Would you mind sharing your thoughts about these aspects?

JCJ - Brazil is not the only country that is drifting to the right, and even to the extreme right. Also widespread is the neoliberal ideology that today has become a “single thought.” As the literature suggests, it is partly due to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, which allowed an entire left in its various hues to enter a mourning period from which we have not yet emerged. This is where I stand and what I feel, something Enzo Traverso (2018) called the “melancholy of the left.” However, a triumphant liberalism found favorable ground to proclaim, in the voice of Ms. Thatcher, the famous acronym TINA – “*There is no alternative*”. Thus, “capitalism is the only alternative”, as it is undergoing constant revolution and adjustment. It is true that your case seems to repeat what Trump's Caesarism was, introducing what in Europe gave rise, with the Hungarian case, to this kind

of oxymoron, which is “illiberal democracy”; in other words, a democratic regime that only preserves the electoral process, forgetting and even suppressing the institutions that limit and scrutinize the various powers of a rule of law. Your current president is more cartoonish in his primary machismo; however, he is strangely effective for some who confuse this with authenticity. Populism feeds on such misconceptions. However, the pandemic situation, still ongoing, has introduced new dynamics. On the one hand, it forced us to slow down and recognize the State's indispensable intervention - as a moratorium on the civilizational process, which eventually could lead to reflection on inflections in history. But, on the other hand, it also made more salient the triadic relationship between science/political power/common sense, which I mentioned earlier. This process is greatly influenced by Serge Moscovici's work *princeps* on the social representation of psychoanalysis, as the Professor is well aware, except for the fact that now the very uncertainty of science has made triadic mediations more uncertain, giving rise to the denials it refers to.

MFBA - That is true, Prof. Jesuíno. Bourdieu (2004, p. 21) would say that “the scientific field is a social world and, as such, it makes impositions, requests, etc., that are, however, relatively independent of the pressures of the global social world that surrounds them”. The problem is that every scientific or political field is a “field of struggle to conserve or transform this field of forces” (p. 22-23).

JCJ - Making the dialogue even more confusing, more complicated. More than complex, more *complicated*. The French philosopher Jean-Pierre Dupuy (2002) makes a good distinction between the notions of *complexity* and *complication*. He asserts *complexity* is simple, because it consists of a network of *nodes* and *links*, being a system whose logic we can unravel; the notion of *complication* is more rhizomatic, dense, tangled, difficult to transcribe through algorithms. Our first step to introducing some intelligibility is to simplify, to reduce complexity to a lesser degree, and, by doing so, we lose information. For example, one of the great issues of our time - global warming -, the *natural* question that Moscovici was talking about, illustrates the phenomenon well and, in a way, explains why scientists disagree, especially with regard to anthropogenic factors. Ultimately, everything depends on the scale on which the phenomenon is analyzed. Hence, conspiracies abound even among scientists, and they end up being even more distorted by common sense and embarrassing decision-making agencies. When considering the current

pandemic, there is a hypothesis that it is an epiphenomenon of the predatory processes to which humans have submitted nature, causing changes in the ecological niches of animals carrying the virus. Another perverse effect? But there is also no lack of conspiracy theories claiming that the virus spread due to other types of perverse effects, such as escaping from laboratories, either through carelessness or because of criminal intent. And it is not a matter of delusional imagination, as there are reasons that justify the erosion of public trust.

MFBA - A problem that has affected the entire world.

JCJ - It is a trend that affects all of us, but perhaps it takes on particular relevance in Brazil, a subcontinent that is home to the Amazon Forest. Due to her Brazilian and academic background, Professor Fátima will certainly be closer to this new relational web in which decision making will be challenging. And it will not be easy to dialogue with students or even help them to thematize the issues. An observation by the French anthropologist and philosopher Bruno Latour (2015), currently one of the leading voices on the Anthropocene issue, comes to my mind: He says it is important to distinguish between matters of fact and matters of concern. When there are sufficiently disturbing reasons to justify the precautionary principle, we cannot wait all the time in the world for science to prove the facts. On the other hand, Latour also regrets, as a surprise in his essay, the epistemological radicalism of the sociology of science he contributed to, which reinforces skepticism toward technoscience, undermining our trust in it and multiplying conspiracy theories.

MFBA - It is my belief that this phenomenon, in which mistrust is strengthened and conspiracy theories multiply, poses a series of *risks* to societies in general, especially to the countries in the south, as Ulrich Beck (2010) points out in his book "Risk Society: Toward Another Modernity"⁶. There are people who die or have serious sequelae in these so-called "emerging countries", and here I am also referring to Brazil, because they are not informed about risks such as radioactivity and damage caused by toxins in the air, water, and food, which until today remain invisible and are irreversible. As examples, one cannot ignore the tragedies of Cubatão, in the 1980s, and the collapse of the dams in Mariana, (2015) and Brumadinho, in Minas Gerais, (2019), among others. In Beck's words (2010, p. 26), these

⁶ Ulrich Beck's (2010) book was written in 1984, right after the Chernobyl accident, when that Ukrainian city's nuclear power plant exploded.

tragedies represent "social situations of threat". Initially, these risks affect the most vulnerable populations; however, as the author points out, later, they affect those who produced them or profited (and profit) from them as well. Thus, this author asserts that there is what he calls a "boomerang effect, which implodes the class scheme" (p. 26). Therefore, little is known about these and other tragedies. Hence, there is this denialism, and today there are many more victims of Covid-19 than is reported.

JCJ - As mentioned, along this line there is the book by Jean-Pierre Dupuy - "*Pour un catastrophisme éclairé. Quand l'impossible este certain*" (2002), which is very provocative and helps us reflect on the fate of humanity, sometimes in apocalyptic tones. He offers us a less pessimistic discourse, however. This author uses a counterfactual dialectic to suggest that we may be able to prevent a certain tragedy by anticipating it. Or, ironically, to make it even more inevitable. But I agree with you and give Ulrich Beck's less speculative remarks more credit, as I do to the well-informed Brazilian voices of Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, as well expressed in their recent, 2017, title - "Há Mundo Por Vir"? (Is there a World to Come?). I heard them speak at a conference in Lisbon, in 2018.

MFBA - Prof. Jesuíno, Jean-Pierre Dupuy also published a book called "Retour of Tchernobyl: Journal d'un homme en colère" (DUPUY, 2006), when he returned from his trip to Ukraine, due to the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe. After reading the official UN report with the "definitive balance" of the catastrophe and contrasting what he saw locally, he was so indignant that he authored this book. Aside from all this, however, there are political and social issues that either conceal or deny these tragedies.

JCJ - That is, of course, what actually happens under an authoritarian government. I am also reminded of the days of Oliveira Salazar in Portugal. Floods in the 1960s, for example, caused hundreds of deaths at the time, but these deaths were not widely known until much later. At the time they said they concealed it aiming not to disturb, not to overwhelm people... I also remember the consensus there was in condemning a sensationalist and populist press, which emphasizes social disasters, scandals, and which still today is practiced even in nations considered to be more evolved, such as the United Kingdom. But, of course, that does not help at all. On the contrary, it diverts attention from the really

critical issues that affect citizens and focuses on emotionality, on trivial facts. Today, it is more difficult to hide the excesses of government. Social networks have contributed to generalize scrutiny, and at the institutions themselves accountability has become a widespread practice that requires more subtle mechanisms to circumvent. There is also a tendency to introduce noise into information now, just as there was during wartime. In other words, it mischaracterizes, ridicules, and disfigures the adversary's message. We see a typical example today with the precept of "political correctness" propagated by leftist sources, intended to avoid racist and sexist offenses, but which ended up being ridiculed by the tone of quasi-censorship, giving rise to political incorrectness.

MFBA - It seems to me that the problem is "invisible to the eyes", paraphrasing Saint-Exupéry (2016).

JCJ - Yes, and where the truth has an ambiguous resonance. The "Regimes of Truth"⁷, which Foucault (2011) mentions, become increasingly precarious. And, after all, what do we mean by truth? The question is always embarrassing. What kind of truth are we referring to? The truth of the facts? And what are facts - are they numbers? Are they mainly interpretations? Are we interested in truth or above all in verisimilitude? We thus enter a minefield with which the Professor is certainly familiar, but which I will not pursue here. It leaves us with a less demanding definition of common sense, a language game with vague contours closer to what seems plausible, confirmed by those in charge. It occurs to me that under a less demanding epistemological standpoint, I should turn to one of my favorite sociologists, Niklas Luhmann, whose diagnosis I consider accurate, yet simple. There is a sense that the world we live in is increasingly improbable. Since time brings more of the same, both the good and the bad, it is inevitable that more of the same will occur. For example, *digitization* brings enormous benefits, but it also brings huge concerns and unforeseeable consequences. It seems that Popper's injunctions to focus on consequences does not work. As the world becomes more unlikely, it also becomes more vulnerable. We are more susceptible to terrorist attacks, financial fraud, hacker interference, genetic manipulation, panopticon dystopias, not to mention the ecological

⁷ To Foucault (2011, p. 27), "regimes of truths" imply a set of values and strategies, which produce truths, which translate into "different modes of discursivity", and can "find themselves in different societies" (p. 27).

crisis which puts us in a double bind planetary system - whatever the measures, they seem insufficient and there is only forward motion.

MFBA - Exactly, that is right. In this case, as Moscovici (2012, p. 225) teaches us, “we are then faced with a plurality of cognitive systems and social situations between which there is a *suitability relationship*”, or, as you put it, in which “the only thing left seems to be the flight forward”. And all this translates into those “perverse effects”.

JCJ - The adjective “perverse” is possibly unsuitable. The expression “social dilemma” in English literature seems to detail some of the situations described, especially those in which decisions are made based on incomplete information. But is not that the very nature of the decision? It is also a well-known aggregation effect - the difference between individual rationality and collective rationality generating the phenomena of the tragedy of the commons or the free rider. Individually, not paying taxes is the most rational thing to do. Of course, the collective will not survive if nobody pays. The wisdom of nations has already largely corrected this, through the system of quotas, which, as we know, are not always accepted in the libertarian logic.

MFBA - These “social dilemmas” also cause social, economic, and political side effects, such as market losses, capital depreciation, bureaucratic controls in the hands of business, the opening of new markets, astronomical costs, judicial proceedings, loss of prestige, all serving as the political potential of catastrophes (BECK, 2010). This is a panorama that portrays lost certainties and breached trust. And it makes us recall old and new questions about what the human being is. How to move forward with nature? Why are we tossed back and forth between everyday life, politics, and science? As a result, we are also forced to reflect on the conflicts of today.

JCJ - The Professor mentions perplexities I have as well. I find it difficult to have a clear idea of the various scenarios that seem to have unfolded over the last thirty years, a period that has ironically been labeled as the “disastrous thirties” as a counterpoint to the post-war “glorious thirties.” It appears that the globalization project under US hegemony was encouraged by a whole alternative left - the famous third way theorized by Anthony Giddens, followed by a whole dynasty of democratic leaders, who would have definitively compromised the left ideals, but which, nevertheless, proposed another globalization, one

that Boaventura de Sousa Santos described using the tasty expression "epistemologies of the South". This pandemic outbreak, however, has only reinforced the competitive paradigm of the return to republican nationalisms already evident in Donald Trump's statements, the UK Brexit, or even in populist drifts worldwide. Returning to the question I mentioned behind the pandemic moratorium: What will be our new normality? As a new technology-based powerhouse with nothing to envy from the West and that, in fact, challenges Western hegemony, what role does the New China play? And what about Brazil? Is it going to contribute to starting a new BRIC that is completely unconnected to the previous one?

MFBA - In this sense, Prof. Jesuíno, when considering either the conflicts or risks, or both, that we experience in present times, I once again mention Moscovici (2012), who in the *Afterword* of his seminal book "Psychoanalysis, its Image and its Public" says that: "The study of social representations takes us, in a way, to the heart of important cultural and practical conflicts" (p. 447). And, aware of this *risk*, as he himself emphasizes, did not avoid "[...] considering one or another current political or religious attitude and presenting an opinion about it", insisting "on the attempt and not on the result" (p. 447). Based on this Moscovician thought, in your opinion, which *cultural and practical conflicts* are more important for us to reflect on with regard to the current fields of Education and Culture? And more, what about the "permanence" and the "changes" that are possible for these two social spaces?

JCJ - Serge Moscovici does not help us much to think about these problems, which we briefly mentioned, at least from the usual political, and even less partisan perspective of his. The Professor will agree that, in some ways, he rejected questions of power that he considered alien to the discipline of social psychology he helped to reshape. Not that he did not consider them important, but because they implied another type of rationality and, above all, of *praxis*. This is where he differs greatly from Pierre Bourdieu. The most pressing social and cultural issue to SM, which will ultimately also be political, is anti-Semitic racism, which he later also extended to other ethnic minorities. In addition, one cannot say that racism is more right-wing than left-wing since it has traversed centuries of history and mobilized entire populations. Strictly related is the notion of *ideology*, which SM considered as derived from "social representations" as soon as they were appropriated by political causes or groups. To him, a more genetic or even genealogical perspective was

the priority, one that would allow for a better understanding of this type of transition, and which themata they were ultimately anchored to. On the other hand, and now in the field of practices, we know that he was an activist of the “natural question”, reacting to the progressive destruction of the environment, and he did so in the 1970s, long before the centrality that the question later assumed. But even in this domain, SM ends up resigning from the Greens, precisely when the communists “appropriated” the movement. Nothing I say contradicts what he has already stated clearly. In a way, we can consider him a libertarian in the most idealistic sense. If I may speculate a little, I would say that he would be both against the nuclear lobby and the green energies lobby, both tributaries of the hypocrisy of sustainability. To me, he is more favorable to what is now called “methodological playfulness”, a kind of return to the zero growth of the 40s of the Club of Rome, which currently only rare voices dare to decline, surrendering to the condescending compassion of doxa. Moreover, it is this invitation to “change your life,” not in the sense of Sloterdijk, which we hear echoing in the pages of works such as “A society against nature”, in which SM invites and challenges us to “savage nature”, and where he also admits that women will only be liberated with the dissolution of the family. But SM’s libertarianism also leads him to value the role of active minorities, of dissidents who may even be solitary, like the case of Solzhenitsyn, which he examines in his work on the processes of social influence. A work that perhaps SM would have intended to function as a breviary of social and even cultural change and whose traits are actually similar to those of identity struggles that have largely been reduced to Human Rights struggles today. Therefore, to us it seems that SM was more an adept of the movements than a partisan militant.

MFBA - I agree with you, when touching on such significant aspects to reflect on the conflicts we have been through, to think about reconstituting this “normality”, accentuated by the ideas of liberalism and neoliberalism, of populism, which affect our democracies and disturb our reading of today’s world. I think that these cultural and practical conflicts, in some way, speak to social thought, which is sometimes conservative/traditional, and sometimes opens gaps for creating/innovating social space. Now, considering the *first* thematic axis of this Dossier - *education and school culture in a scenario of uncertainties and social inequalities* -, I would also like to highlight another one of Moscovici’s reflections (2011), which appears in the chapter called “The Disappeared Society”, especially when he states that: “In a way, we mourn the disappeared society, just as a mature man mourns his childhood” (p. 522). Prof. Jesuíno, what *mourning* can we speak of today, when we look

more closely at the scenario of uncertainties that invades *education* and the *school culture* and those who belong there, whether students, teachers, or managers?

JCJ - It is unclear whether a disappeared society will be mourned. Would we like to go back to the 19th century or even earlier? To the long night of a thousand years? Or even to radiant classicism? At most, there will be dispersed mourning, losses that are difficult to reconstruct. Can we talk about mourning from the perspective of the university or, more broadly, of the education system to which we both belong? Although both help us, I think the Professor will agree that Pierre Bourdieu helps us more than Serge Moscovici when we extend the subject not only to teaching, but also to the production of knowledge, that is, to science and now, increasingly to technoscience. More attentive to power games, PB shows us how social fields, and, from the outset, academic fields are structured, where competition and strategy reign more than the *ethos* idealized by Robert Merton. We have not discussed anything that is foreign to what is going on in this niche, which was more of an ivory tower in the past. For some of us, that is indeed a source of grief. There are many of us who look nostalgically to Humboldt University, which might never have existed, to Oxbridge's tutorial and elitist system, or even to the American campuses where sports coaches earn more than regular professors. Over the last 50 years, Higher Education has experienced successive changes, including the massification of access, the near exclusive focus on employability, the increasing dependence on science and its technical applications, the successive limitations to the autonomy of the University, rendering it increasingly dependent on both the State and Industrial Entrepreneurship. In general, universities tend to adopt business management models and become entrepreneurial. Due to her expertise in pedagogical subjects, which she teaches and researches, I will not insist on this panorama that Professor Fátima knows better than I do. Aside from that, I can offer little more than some generalities, which are now somewhat observable everywhere, to our Brazilian readers. One of these common features, however, is *meritocracy*, which seems to be a hegemonic social representation, universally accepted as fair and natural. Might there be an alternative? In any case, I have come to realize over the years that teachers do not like to assess, and students do not like to be assessed. However, everyone accepts it as legitimate or as a necessary evil. The typical example of what PB designated as *symbolic violence*. Meanwhile, in 1958, the sociologist Michael Young, who coined the term, satirized its perverse effects by inducing the arrogance of the victors and the humiliation of those left behind. It is yet another controversial issue that, today, leads to

the suggestion that assessments should be decentralized, including through algorithms based on artificial intelligence, which do not alter the underlying ideology, but only make it more efficient.

MFBA - In fact, Prof. Jesuíno, this issue of meritocracy has this perverse effect, especially in the field of Education. Bourdieu (1998b), when analyzing the “social factors of school excellence” (p. 234-241), indicates that there are ways of selecting this “excellence”, which, here, we can call a form of “meritocracy”. Such meritocracy favors, on the one hand, either “social prestige” or “cultural capital”, or both, and, on the other, it reinforces the “effects of social inequality”. And that is a pity! Even more so, now, under the effects of the pandemic and the challenges posed by the uncertainties and the neoliberal scourge, in which there is a greater defense of privatization and conservative and authoritarian practices.

JCJ - PB helps us to dismantle a system that claims to be meritocratic, but does not function as such. The data are biased from the outset in a system that reproduces social inequalities and not a “social elevator,” to use the established expression. But it was never clear whether it was a fixed sum or variable sum system. Apparently, even if it is of variable sum, relative differentials still function as systems of distinction, as he describes very well in questions of *taste*. It is only sometimes possible to compensate for a lack of economic capital with cultural capital. It is my thesis, and one Young already argued in 1958, that even if it works in ideal terms, it remains a perverse and dangerous system. Individuals who achieve high grades in a course or a prominent position tend to attribute their success to their merit, that is, to their personal qualities, innate and acquired, as opposed to favorable conditions or even chance. Being in the right place at the right time. It is well known in social psychology that we attribute our mistakes to external factors, while our successes to ourselves. These psychological processes have become increasingly sociocultural, serving as a criterion for corporate retreat. Identities logics, such as feminism, also incorporate meritocracy. In the system of triadic relationships, which I mentioned earlier, sometimes called the “triple helix”, there is an increasingly pronounced dissatisfaction between the supply and demand of staff and technicians - neither can students find the exits they aspire to and what they are prepared for, nor do employers consider the diploma to be sufficient as a selection tool. What is quantifiable, translatable into numbers is valued, which, in essence, is a simplification. However, many of the issues we have to face are not related to calculations, rather to judgment, not so much so of the

necessary and sufficient reason, but of insufficient reason. In fact, we have known since Ashby that the greater the complexity, the greater the capacity required to solve it. In this respect, the Humanities are perhaps more helpful, and let us not forget that the elites of Oxbridge, fluent in Latin and Greek, were those who later held high positions in the Administration. There have been proposals, even by an American author, for the abolition of diplomas, replacing them with competencies, which would restrict and specialize higher education even more, and restrict general culture to secondary schools. Stefan Collini (2012), in his controversial work “What Universities Are For?” goes to the extreme of considering the studies of the Humanities as the main function of universities, reserving to institutes the specialized study of science and technology.

MFBA - On the other hand, Prof. Jesuíno, it is also necessary to reflect on the conditions of possibilities and forms of resistance in relation to this “mourning” we go through. The importance of education as a guarantee of social rights, therefore, its fairness and inclusion, cannot be overstated. As Bourdieu (1997) teaches us, we must have a “reflex reflexivity” posture, which “is synonymous with method” and with a significant work focused on the Education we want. So, let us move on to our *second* thematic axis - *education and digital culture* in the context of changes -, also highlighting the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, in which schools around the world were closed, so that their students could continue their training processes online and from home. We will discuss a few challenges Brazilian education faced during these pandemic times before asking the question. Among them, we highlight a) Managers and teachers immediately had to reflect on how to develop new learning situations in digital environments. In this sense, remote and emergency teaching was practiced, without effective pedagogical reflection, and, sometimes, just to keep activities going and complete the school year; b) There was, therefore, the transition from face-to-face to virtual environments, and the need to reflect on the times and spaces of appropriation and incorporation of new ways of learning and teaching; c) However, at the beginning of the process, it was noticed that *managers* were greatly concerned with complying with the legislation establishing remote teaching; *teachers*, meanwhile, were worried about transposing didactic methods to digital platforms, reinforcing, in general, the permanence of lectures, as if this were a “mirror” of face-to-face teaching; and, on the students’ side, there was the inability to understand how to use digital technology or, worse, a lack of access to these media (an issue persisting yet today), deepening existing inequalities, especially among most students in public schools;

d) On the other hand, also, the *digital culture* caused a context of changes in the behavior of educational agents and their students, involving issues of relationship and behavior in virtual environments, which put *social violence* on the agenda with an emphasis on *cyber exclusion* or *cyber aggression*. Faced with these issues, we ask: Prof. Jesuíno, what are the *solutions* for the Education we want? That is, for that education that enables one “[...] to identify the challenges posed by the uncertainties and the neoliberal scourge of this time of pandemic, and to question the conditions of possibilities and forms of resistance, in particular, of the school, in guaranteeing social rights and a fairer and inclusive education” (ABDALLA, 2021, p. 1)?

JCJ - The *resistance* and *reflexivity* PB recommended and followed so much could not be more timely and more necessary. Today's discredited intellectuals have no weapon left but this one. Digital techniques have invaded all levels of education, opening up new opportunities for reflection. On one hand, they may have undermined a system that relies on the metaphor of the "sage on the stage," i.e., the teacher serving as master and advisor. The master or teacher was a prestigious figure in *Confucian culture*, second only to the father. This was not the case in the West, but without a doubt the university professor held a supreme hierarchical position, although not identical for all disciplinary areas, as described by PB. Nevertheless, digital platforms came to compete for the monopoly of teaching knowledge, making it more accessible and easier to assimilate. From "sage on the stage," the teacher who is now needed will be more a "guide at your side," a "primus inter pares," and learning something shared between teachers and students. As far as reducing distance to power is concerned, this does not seem like a loss, but rather an advantage. However, it also seems, of course, that there are more demands now, given that the teacher also has more sophisticated means of knowledge. About three years ago, I saw a BBC program that discussed the possibility of teachers being laid off soon. It is unlikely that this will be the case, but I do believe that they will have to make more use of their imagination and creativity. Professor Fátima, as a pedagogue, will certainly have already reflected on this change. In a recent publication, published by Enakshi Sengupta, I even found the idea, in agreement with Collini, that new digital technologies may even contribute to humanizing higher education. While it is true that the pandemic led to the dispersion of school communities at all levels, it is also true that the experience was not well received, at least not in its entirety, resulting in a desirable face-to-face interaction, both between teachers and students, and between students and students. The Professor

also stresses in one of her texts the importance of creating a culture, both at the level of nearby courts and at the broader level of the school, or even of the alma mater which the University always represents. If this does not happen, can we still talk about the University? In this aspect, of creating culture, I came across a Canadian model proposed by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (1999), under which a humanized online pedagogy system implies the coordination of three overlapping elements (like Venn diagrams), including: (1) A cognitive presence of critical thinking; (2) A teaching orientation in terms of curricular and instrumental organization, and (3) A social presence that mediates interactions between the various participants. It is against the background of this architecture, which the authors call “communities of inquiry,” that we imagine new teachers facing the new generation of “digital natives,” who seem to have been born with these new skills and open to new ways of learning and thinking that enable them to face an increasingly complex world, knowing how to distinguish what is *signal* and what is *noise*.

MFBA - I also agree with you, Prof. Jesuíno. With active teaching and learning methodologies, it has been possible to develop a more creative teaching method that is closer to students, which is inseparable from theory and practice, with a view to the integral development of students, a new way of organizing space and time, and a more humanizing teaching process, among other points. But, regardless of these methodologies, Paulo Freire (1997, p. 110), our great Brazilian educator, who would turn a hundred years old this year, already taught us the importance of “understanding that education is a form of intervention in the world”. And that, in this perspective, it was therefore necessary to problematize teaching and learning situations to detect issues and seek solutions to overcome them, also reinventing “the historical way of fighting” for an Education for all. And I think that if he were alive today, he would have a lot to say about this context of digital culture...

JCJ - In my most recent readings, and not so much the result of experience, since I left teaching in 2018, and at the time being extremely limited to master’s degrees with a small number of students, I was able to come across imaginative proposals, limiting myself to invoking some of them, which the Professor will know better than I do and may want to comment on. One of these experiences consists of what in English is called “*flipped classroom using digital media*”. It consists of limiting face-to-face classes to problem solving and group exercises, while students learn the theory at home, either following

master classes, taught by teachers, or other sources they choose, or even consulting the bibliography. There is also what they call gamification as a pedagogical tool; in fact, it has been a long-standing American tradition that almost forced teachers to be fun (or to be punished if they were not), to resort to humor or educational games, which digital media have enriched with a wide range of new possibilities. Professor David E. Rose, of Newcastle University, suggests, as another example, to dedicate a week per semester to joint meetings between faculty and students to discuss issues that affect the community, without calculating, but by advising scenarios to be built and alternatives to be evaluated. Based on the little I know about Brazil, given the variety of situations that a not only an immense, but diversified territory implies and demands, I believe we will have a lot to learn from you in this field.

MFBA - I agree. As such, I see technology as a pedagogical tool for creating learning and teaching environments. However, it is necessary to have public policies that invest in teacher training in the virtual environments of schools and universities, so that everyone has access to digital platforms and that, in fact, contribute to this learning space, including professional learning. Moving on to the *third* and last thematic axis, which concerns the current *education and professional culture*, we emphasize that, here, in Brazil, teacher education policies (initial or continuing, or both) and those that concern professionalization and valuing teaching, when under the effects of other regulatory policies, affect the teacher's work, leading it, above all, to precariousness. And, above all, in this pandemic, social, and political context, teachers and other education professionals are submitted to "unlimited exploitation", as Bourdieu (1998c) would say in his book "ContraFogos: Tactics to face the neoliberal invasion". As this author emphasizes, the current discourse of public policies, and I would say, here, of educational policies, has been putting into *risk*: "[...] all collective structures capable of resisting the logic of the pure market: *Nation*, whose room for maneuver continues to decrease; *working groups*, with, for example, the individualization of wages and careers, according to individual skills and the resulting atomization of workers, unions, associations, cooperatives, and even the *family*, which, through the constitution of markets based on age classes, loses part of its control over consumption" (emphasis added) (BOURDIEU, 1998c, p. 137). Thus, as Bourdieu (1998c) teaches us, the absolute reign of flexibility, competition, individualization, and its strategies of "accountability" are established, in the opposite direction of the so-called and desired "collective solidarity". This deepens, once again,

social inequalities, the lack of justice in human rights, thus enhancing the suffering of all Education workers, and, therefore weakening what we consider as “professional culture”, its consequences and implications. These factors reinforce the government's inability to provide quality education, thereby deepening and legitimizing the increasingly brutal differences and inequalities in Brazilian society. For our final reflection, let us return to your words: “In this institutional and institutionalized framework, change tends to become incremental, governed by slight adjustments, and only rarely, in times of crisis, do metamorphic changes occur” (JESUÍNO, 2019, p. 9). This leads us to our last question: What “metamorphic changes” are likely to take place due to the current crisis in education and culture?

JCJ - As the word implies, metamorphic changes lead to alterations in form, to revolutions. We use them this way in texts about organizations, not so much in texts about political events, such as the French revolution or the Russian revolution. Generally, such changes are exceedingly rare in organizational structures, while incremental changes, which require successive small adjustments, may result in profound changes over time. Increments of this type can be spontaneous or prompted. Changes at the local and global levels are often driven by technological developments that affect organizational structures and citizens alike. The population does not always welcome such progress. Our analysis of education systems has already mentioned the impact of digital technologies, as well as the successive and almost insensitive changes that have resulted in a progressive loss of university autonomy and its submission to business and economic interests. As an incubator of ideas and of emancipatory spirits, universities have a reputation or perhaps just a myth of wielding the banner of revolt or even revolution at critical times. Is it possible that such consequences could arise from the loss of autonomy? May 68, in France, or the inspiring movements in the United States in protest against the Vietnam War immediately come to mind. Because of the ambiguity with which the experience was described, the observers were confused by the experience. It is unclear to me whether either SM or PB anticipated the implications of such events for future institutions or even for social representations of common sense. Would they be festive “heirs”, oblivious to the consequences of their excesses? Certainly “active minorities”, but “nomic” or “anomic”? We can learn little from the texts of the masters, whom we revere so much. May 68, however, took place during the “thirty glorious” period, and the slogan “it is forbidden to forbid” remained as a symbol of challenge to professorial authority, which again had a

slow, latent effect, and not only in France. While in the past we were never Confucians, we are infinitely less so now. My hunch, however, is that a student revolt today may be something along the lines of a casting error. Change will be incremental rather than dramatically revolutionary, whether it comes from students or workers. To honor Jean-Luc Nancy, now deceased, I would like to reiterate something I said earlier about him, which is that the capitalist system can withstand external attacks, so its extinction can only occur from within. Is that not what Marx had already predicted? The world today is experiencing a strange redistribution of political ideologues, with those on the right believing that the revolution has begun, that we are bastions of light; and those on the left, considering that the revolution is still ongoing, and, possibly, always yet to begin, and it is not just science that will emancipate us.

MFBA - Prof. Jesuíno, we are inspired by your words. They lead us to rethink the immense challenges that lie ahead, especially for the Education and Culture of our country and the world. Please accept our sincere thanks for your willingness, for the exchange of experiences, and for the many and significant lessons you taught us. Once again, this brings to mind the word *confidence*, which translates to "trust one's life to another". As we continue with our projects, may we "spin" our stories and "trust" our possibilities, so that, in some way, we can also contribute to "metamorphic changes", as you emphasize so well, in these times of crisis. Once again, thank you!

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