



$\int f(x) dx = \lim_{\Delta x \rightarrow 0} (f(a)\Delta x + f(x_1)\Delta x + \dots + f(x_n)\Delta x)$

μυθολογία

mitologia

$\sum a_i = a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_n$

ιταν αγε ατιζο

OUR MYTHICAL EDUCATION

Edited by Lisa Maurice

神話

(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)

$\begin{pmatrix} y_1 \\ y_2 \\ \vdots \\ y_n \end{pmatrix} = x_1 y_1 + x_2 y_2 + \dots + x_n y_n \left(\frac{u}{v} \right) =$

mitologie

$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2^n} = 2$

∞ מיתולוגיה

$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp\left(-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right)$

μυθολογία

$F(x) + C$

$y = \ln x$

μυθολογία

Mythologie

$\int \frac{dx}{x} = \ln|x| + C$

mitologia

$N(\mu, \sigma^2)$

$C = \frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}$

OUR MYTHICAL EDUCATION

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OUR MYTHICAL
EDUCATION
The Reception
of Classical Myth
Worldwide in Formal
Education, 1900–2020

Edited by Lisa Maurice



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$$|p_n\rangle = i\sqrt{\frac{\hbar}{2m\omega}} \left[\sqrt{n+1} \delta_{n,n+1} - \sqrt{n} \delta_{n,n-1} \right]$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 & \dots & \dots \\ \sqrt{2} & 0 & \dots \\ 0 & \sqrt{3} & \dots \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots \sqrt{n} \end{bmatrix} \text{mythologie} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ \sqrt{1} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \sqrt{2} & 0 \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \\ 0 & 0 & \sqrt{n} \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\langle x \rangle = \langle \alpha | \hat{x} | \alpha \rangle = \left(\frac{m\omega}{\pi\hbar} \right)^{1/4} e^{-\frac{1}{2} \frac{m\omega}{\hbar} x^2}$$

$$\langle p \rangle = \left[\frac{1}{2^n n!} \left(\frac{\hbar}{m\omega} \right)^{n/2} \left(\frac{m\omega}{\pi\hbar} \right)^{1/4} \right] \left[\frac{m\omega}{\hbar} x - \frac{d}{dx} \right]$$



mythology

$$\langle P^2 \rangle = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \psi_n^*(x) \frac{d^2}{dx^2} \psi_n(x)$$

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \psi(\vec{r}, t) = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \Delta \psi$$

$$\Delta = \partial^2/\partial x^2 + \partial^2/\partial y^2 + \dots$$

mitologia

$$|\psi_1\rangle + \lambda_2 |\psi_2\rangle \Rightarrow \lambda_1^* \langle \psi_1 | + \lambda_2^*$$

$$|\psi(r)\rangle \quad E = \langle K \rangle$$

Part IV

OUR AMERICAN MYTHICAL EDUCATION

THE CONTRIBUTION OF GRAECO-ROMAN MYTHOLOGY TO THE FORMATION OF BRAZILIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

I. Introduction

The goal of this piece is to demonstrate how the use of mythology reveals and highlights the official public educational policies of Brazil according to the changes to the public educational system implemented in different periods. Since the general aim of education is the formation of the individual, the focus in this work is on how mythology has influenced the formation of the Brazilian citizen. This investigation is carried out from the perspective of cultural history, concentrating on human elements and their relationship to culture, symbols, meanings, and discourses, but also on iconographies and documents.¹

This was no simple task because, although the teaching of mythology has been practised in one way or another since the beginning of the history of Brazil, most of the material reveals only the content of what was taught rather than how it was used. In order to understand the role of mythology, therefore, a search was conducted for these elements in the documents found in the educational archives of Brazil, in particular documents produced by teachers and students. The results were then supplemented with information from official documents, such as laws and, when relevant, books that were officially adopted or endorsed by the public system. Such a search was an extremely complex task due to the fact that Brazil still has neither a central nor a digitalized educational archive, and it was therefore necessary

¹ Roger Chartier, *A história cultural: entre práticas e representações* [Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations], trans. Maria Manuela Galhardo, Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand-Brasil, 1993. The book is a translation of a collection of eight articles which appeared originally in French between 1982 and 1986 and were then published together in English in 1988 under the title *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations* (trans. Lydia Cochrane).

to go through multiple centres in the hope of finding materials that would be of use. Furthermore, in many instances rooms were filled with boxes and files that lacked any categorization, and in some cases were not even catalogued. Not all places permitted public visits, and even photocopying material was often impossible without going through tremendous bureaucracy. Despite these difficulties, enough material has been collected to enable the presentation of a description that is the first of its kind, and that, it is to be hoped, may open doors to further investigations. With regards to structure, the paper provides a brief summary of the Brazilian official educational policies in each given era, and then outlines the way in which mythology was used during these periods.

2. From the Discovery of Brazil to the Republic: 1500–1889

Brazil was discovered by Portugal in 1500, and the arrival of the Jesuits forty-nine years later marks the beginning of the history of Brazilian education. In 1599, the *Ratio studiorum* was published – a set of pedagogical rules that were to be followed in Jesuit schools, where the study of the humanities was considered to be of utmost importance.² Excerpts from authors such as Homer, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristotle, Cicero, Caesar, Virgil, and Horace were studied as part of this programme, the goal of which was the moral and religious formation of the Christian man according to the canon of the Catholic Church as expressed in the ideals of the Society of Jesus. Classical mythology was used to situate the students in high culture, and to help them comprehend the world and human behaviour.

This period produced chroniclers, historians, poets, and orators, all of whom were active members of the incipient society of the Portuguese colony. It is possible to see these traces in the writings of the most famous student of the period, Father Antônio Vieira (1608–1697). His sermons, delivered both in Brazil and in Europe, contain references to the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, to the *Ethics* of Aristotle, and to Plato when it comes to the government system. Plautus and Terence are used as authors whose comedies portrayed life's mishaps, the vanity of the world, and other points of moral doctrine. Virgil, Horace, and Ovid also feature in his sermons.

² For a more detailed study on this period, see Tito Lívio Ferreira, *História da educação luso-brasileira* [History of Luso-Brazilian Education], São Paulo: Saraiva, 1966.

By 1759, when the Jesuits were expelled from Brazil, they had created twenty schools and twelve seminaries following this curriculum. The expulsion of the Jesuits was caused by the Pombaline Reforms, led in Portugal by Marquis de Pombal, an enlightened despot who had an interest in the industrialization of Portugal. Considering the presence and influence of the Jesuits in Brazil to be against the interests of Portugal, he expelled them, thereby destroying the only system of education in existence.

The intention of the Pombaline Reforms was to popularize education and make it more practical, making people more suited to address new commercial demands and the desires of an elite whose values were closer to those of the Enlightenment. The Jesuit system was decreed to be uniform, dogmatic, authoritarian, and excessively literary. In its place were substituted the so-called *aulas régias*, general courses that had no relationship with one another. While in Portugal the change in the administrative structure was accompanied by a change in pedagogical practice, this did not happen in the same way in Brazil.

Given the scarcity of books and teachers, the *aulas régias* in Brazil were limited. Most of the teachers who arrived in Brazil were priests with a humanist education, and the content ended up being a toned-down version of what had previously been taught by the Jesuits. Nevertheless, the appearance of the Academicist movement (1816–1931), which aimed to preserve and develop humanist studies, including classical studies as a whole, is notable.

In summary, therefore, this period may be characterized by the following points:

1. Education was limited to a small intellectual elite.
2. Mythology was taught through Greek and Latin texts and was part of a humanist education.
3. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was opposition towards humanist education, which was regarded as outdated, but no significant modification took place.
4. The humanist base, notwithstanding its critics, served as one of the elements of the political mentality of the country, which was at that time in its formation period.

3. The First Republic: 1889–1930

After the proclamation of the Republic in 1889 and the subsequent expulsion of the Portuguese Royal Family from Brazil, the organization of Brazilian society changed. New social classes appeared: the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, the urban middle class, and the industrial proletariat. Furthermore, different ideological groups coexisted: socialists, anarchists, Catholics, nationalists, and militarists. All the social, political, and economic changes that occurred in this period created a thrust towards education and a movement against illiteracy, which was seen as an obstacle to the development of Brazil. Education in this period must be considered in light of three elements:

1. enthusiasm for education, as demonstrated by the effort put into educating an elite that was intended to be at the forefront of Brazil's development;
2. pedagogical optimism, reflected in the belief that education was a vital tool for the development of Brazil;
3. experimentalism, marked by consecutive attempts to implement different and new forms of education.

With regard to this last element, there were a range of different educational reforms. The Benjamin Constant Reform (1890) and the Epiácio Pessoa civil code (1901) promoted a system of education in which history, literature, and classical studies gave way to mathematics, physics, and biology. Both reforms were strongly influenced by Auguste Comte's positivism.³ In a different vein, the Rivadávia Corrêa Reform (1911–1915) abolished mandatory school attendance, eliminated certificates, and was marked by a strong liberal tone, which, like the positivism, was opposed by the Catholics. In the 1920s, there were many regional reforms inspired by João Luiz Alvares and Rocha Vaz's reform of 1925, according to which education was again regulated, certificates reinstated, and once again the balance shifted from liberalism to positivism. Although education was intended to reach a wide mass of people, in practice it was still relatively restricted to the upper classes. The rate of illiteracy was still high, and most people did not continue

³ The influence of positivism in Brazil during this period was very strong. The Brazilian flag still carries the positivist motto: "Ordem e Progresso" (Order and Progress).

their formal education after the age of fourteen, at which point they usually joined the workforce.

Classical mythology can still be found in this period, through Latin and Greek literature, although to a lesser extent than previously. In this period, however, examples of mythology being used to achieve a specific goal can already be identified. A 1967 manual of sociology, when discussing the period of the First Republic, describes the three different historical moments as presented by Comte, who divided society into three levels of development: (1) the theological level, when explanations of phenomena were attributed to supernatural forces, myths, and religion; (2) the metaphysical level, marked by a search for the meaning of things; and (3) the positive level, epitomized by the true observation of phenomena through the lens of the scientific method.⁴ In this manual, it was explained that myths are important because they transmit general ideas about real phenomena, thus enabling the subsequent understanding of the development of nations and their ideas.

This idea was present in every school which adopted the positivist approach, which is to say, practically in all public schools. Of all periods of Brazilian education, this is the one which placed the greatest emphasis on discussing the function and value of mythology, and it is safe to say that this was the official view presented to all students in public schools. Although such an interpretation implies that mythology has no intrinsic value for the enlightened positive man, it is notable that mythology was consciously used to promote the values of positivism.

An example of this in the form of a description of Plato's Myth of the Cave is found in a teacher's manual discovered in one of the archives.⁵ There, it is suggested that the students "[c]ompare o Mito da Caverna com os três estágios do desenvolvimento da sociedade" (compare the Myth of the Cave with the three stages of development of society). The answer expected to be derived from this is that the real light that came out of the cave was equivalent to the values of positivism, that is, the search for objective knowledge based on science. Those trapped inside represented the civilizations which had still not achieved the third stage of development; their revolt, which breaks out after true knowledge is revealed, represents the difficulties

⁴ Gustavo Sedras, *Sociologia para jovens do século 20* [Sociology for Youth of the Twentieth Century], Rio de Janeiro: Editora Ao Livro Técnico, 1967.

⁵ Acervo da Escola Municipal Julieta Botelho [Collection of Julieta Botelho Municipal School], *Proposta pedagógica para o ensino de filosofia* [Pedagogical Proposal for Teaching Philosophy], document no. 117, Rio de Janeiro, 1934. The translation of all the fragments cited in this paper is ours.

of change and adaptation. In this example, myth was not only seen as a tool to learn history but actually as a way to boost the premises of positivism.

This period may, therefore, be summarized by the following:

1. Catholic education was replaced by two other systems, namely liberal and positivist education. Catholic education continued to exist but only in the private sphere.
2. Emphasis on the formation of the Brazilian citizen as the creator of the order and the progress of the nation. The ideal citizen that is to be the product of this education has moved away from religion and myth towards knowledge, modernity, and progress.
3. Mythology is used as a tool to boost the mainstream ideological view on the one hand, while on the other is itself understood and taught only through the lens of that same view.

4. The Vargas Period, Capanema Reform, and Escola Nova Movement: 1930–1961

One year after the financial crisis of 1929, Getúlio Vargas rose to power. In 1934, a new constitution was drafted, which tended to concentrate power in the central government and which contained some fascist elements. This period was marked by a struggle between Catholics and conservatives on one side, and liberals and communists on the other, and by many ideological struggles between the government and the communists. In 1937, Vargas alleged that the communists, after a failed attempt two years before, were again plotting to take control of the government and shut down the Congress in a *coup d'état*. Between 1937 and 1945, strong nationalism, civism, and state propaganda were prominent features of society.

The difference between these two periods can be seen by looking at how physical education was officially treated. Thomaz Mazzoni remarks that before Vargas became a dictator “[e]m São Paulo, uma autoridade policial, ao ser-lhe solicitada licença para uma corrida pedestre, respondeu que a polícia não tinha tempo para cuidar de diversões de vagabundos!” (in São Paulo, when the police were asked for a permit to allow a running competition, the answer was that the police did not have time to deal with bum fun).⁶ Mazzoni

⁶ Thomaz Mazzoni, *O esporte a serviço da pátria* [Sport in the Service of the Motherland], São Paulo: Olympicus, 1941, 22.

relates that there was even a literary contest, the goal of which was to ridicule sports. There is no doubt that these ideas were still a hangover from the previous period when physical education often was ignored or kept in the background. However, a significant shift in mentality can be seen after 1937 – the idea of *Mens sana in corpore sano* appears frequently, connected with the new, strong, patriotic citizen, who was ready to defend his motherland.

With regard to education, the culmination of this period is reflected in the Capanema Reform (1942–1946), named after Gustavo Capanema, the Minister of Health and Education, who had occupied the position since Vargas came to power. The reform had two goals: to endow the majority of citizens with technical competence and gear them towards work and love of the motherland; and to create an elite that was intended to receive higher education at a university. Therefore, after seven years of study the students were divided into two groups, one of which received an education geared towards commerce, industry, or agricultural work, and the other an education geared towards future university study.

Two instances of activities which used mythology to boost the patriotic spirit in the students should be noted. The first is found within the framework of a literature class in which the students read the *Aeneid* in Latin and were asked to write an essay and answer the following questions:

1. Qual era o conceito de *pietas* em Roma Antiga?
 2. Enéas personificava esse conceito em todos os momentos? Traga três passagens onde ele parece personificá-la e também três onde ele parece não fazê-lo e defenda a sua posição.
 3. O que você aprende desse conceito no que tange a ser um cidadão brasileiro?⁷
-
1. What was the concept of *pietas* in Ancient Rome?
 2. Did Aeneas embody this concept at all times? Find three passages where he seems to embody it and three where he seems not to, and defend your position.
 3. What can you learn from this concept when it comes to being a Brazilian citizen?

No student essays answering these questions were found in the archives. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that the teacher aimed to create a sense

⁷ Arquivo Municipal da Cidade de Santo Antônio de Pádua [Municipal Archives of Santo Antônio de Pádua County], series L.6581q, 1944, 11.

of pride and duty about being a Brazilian citizen. It should also be noted that this seems to be an early example of interdisciplinary work, since the *Aeneid* was studied in the Latin classes and yet this task was set by the literature teacher.⁸

The second activity that touches on mythology is also connected with the desirable ethos of the Brazilian citizen.⁹ In this case, the subject is domestic economy and the students are teenage girls. The teacher's class plan is entitled "O mito de Belerofonte e a virtude da humildade – a ser desenvolvido em três aulas" [The Myth of Bellerophon and the Virtue of Humility – To Be Developed in Three Classes], and is accompanied by the following scheme:

1. Apresentação do mito de Belerofonte nas obras clássicas.
 2. Contar a estória desde o nascimento até a queda, enfatizando sua arrogância.
 3. Dividir a turma em quatro grupos de modo que cada um irá discutir a estória e responder as perguntas do professor:
 - 3.1. Qual foi a causa da queda de Belerofonte?
 - 3.2. A sua queda foi justa?
 - 3.3. O que ele poderia ter feito para evitá-la?
 4. Como tarefa de casa, os grupos serão requeridos a escolher uma personalidade que obteve sucesso em vencer a sua arrogância ou então em mostrar humildade mesmo quando ele estava em uma posição de superioridade.
 5. Apresentação e discussão da tarefa, enfatizando a relação entre humildade e respeito à hierarquia (pais, marido, religião e Estado).
 6. Tarefa de casa: cada grupo deve explicar a importância de respeitar os pais, o marido, a Igreja e o Estado.
-
1. Presentation of the myth of Bellerophon in the classical texts.
 2. Telling of the story, from his birth until his fall, while placing emphasis on his arrogance.
 3. Class will be divided into four groups and each group will discuss the story and answer questions provided by the teacher:
 - 3.1. What was the cause of Bellerophon's fall?
 - 3.2. Was his fall justified?
 - 3.3. What could he have done in order to avoid it?

⁸ We have found anecdotal evidence that cases of interdisciplinarity were not as rare as some assume. However, when such cases occurred, it was on the initiative of the individual teacher since this issue has only been given importance in the Brazilian educational system since 1996.

⁹ Arquivo Municipal da Cidade de Santo Antônio de Pádua [Municipal Archives of Santo Antônio de Pádua County], series L.6602f, 1944, unpaginated.

4. As a home assignment, the groups will be asked to choose a personality who succeeded in overcoming his arrogance or in displaying humility even when he was in a position of superiority.
5. Presentation and discussion of the assignment, emphasizing the relationship between humility and respect for hierarchy (parents, husband, religion, and the State).
6. Home assignment: Each group must explain the importance of respecting parents, one's husband, the Church, and the State.

Clearly the teacher who developed the lesson plan was less concerned with Bellerophon or Greek mythology than with using it in order to advance a certain world view. It is also notable how religion was intertwined with education during this period. Catholic priests were commonly responsible for teaching Latin, and they would open and close classes with a prayer in Latin. Obedience to one's parents and submission to one's husband can presumably be understood as a reflection of the religious spirit of the time. Finally, the submission to the State is noteworthy. The four elements in the teacher's plan present the following order: parents, husband, Church, and State. It is possible that the order was randomly chosen, but it is equally possible that there is an expected hierarchy playing a part here. If that is so, while obedience to religion is important, and more important than family, obedience to the State takes precedence over the rest, providing an example of the fascist elements which crept into the educational system during this period.

In order to understand the events from the end of the Vargas period until 1961, it is necessary to return to the 1930s to understand the birth of the Escola Nova movement. The educational system of the previous period and Capanema's view on education were already denounced as being too academic, too conservative, and not geared towards the needs of the people.¹⁰ Opposition took form at first in the Pioneers' Manifest of 1932, which was a document produced by communist and liberal educators who strived for education for all, mandatory, free, and without religious and conservative influences. During the entire Vargas period, and after, this group was very active, writing books and leading the call for change in education. In the 1950s, Brazil was experiencing an economic boom caused by a growing industry, which required more people who were able to read, comprehend, and write. The economic demand found fertile ground in the voices of those

¹⁰ Otaíza Romanelli, *História da educação no Brasil (1930/1973)* [History of Education in Brazil (1930/1973)], São Paulo: Vozes, 1978.

who opposed the traditional educational system. The Ministry of Education, therefore, heavily invested in teaching and in the creation of centres geared towards the formation of teachers with a different mindset.

This new group occupied important positions and became influential in educational politics especially during the very long debate which culminated in the promulgation of a new education law in 1961. The ideology of these people centred on the idea of the creation of a new man for a changing society. It was believed that to produce this new man, education should pay more attention to the skills necessary for work, while the man himself would strive to dominate nature and change society, in his search for a better future. Consequently, education was strongly influenced by John Dewey's pragmatism,¹¹ coloured by communist ideas.¹²

One of the practical consequences of this mentality in the 1961 law was the abolishment of the students' obligation to learn another language. This meant that there was no more mandatory Latin; it also led to a diminished use of classical texts in literature classes. Nevertheless, there are two interesting examples in which classical myth was used to promote this new educational agenda. In a locally produced manual for history teachers of Grade 6 students, mythology was used to explain a new historical fact. The title of the exercise is "Hefesto e os autômatos: homens e máquinas, ontem e hoje" [Hephaestus and the Automatons: Men and Machine, Yesterday and Today], and under the title it is explained in the following way:

Hefesto criou autômatos para ajuda-lo com diferentes tarefas. Ao dar para cada um uma habilidade específica e atribuindo uma tarefa específica, ele pôde realizar muito mais do que poderia sozinho. A Revolução Industrial colocou em prática a idéia de Hefesto graças ao advento de novas máquinas.

As máquinas permitiram a produção laboral sem interrupções que outrora era realizada por muitas pessoas. Tal como o autômato, cada máquina foi especialmente criada para realizar uma tarefa específica. Entretanto, a máquina não trabalha sozinho e também são necessárias pessoas

¹¹ Anísio Teixeira, *Educação não é privilégio* [Education Is Not a Privilege], Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2001 (ed. pr. 1957); Anísio Teixeira, *A escola progressiva: pequena introdução à filosofia da educação* [The Progressive School: A Short Introduction to the Philosophy of Education], Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2001 (ed. pr. 1968); Anísio Teixeira, *A educação e a crise brasileira* [Education and the Brazilian Crisis], Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2001 (ed. pr. 1956).

¹² Jayme Abreu, *A escola como agente de mudança cultural* [School as the Agent of Cultural Transformation], Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1960.

especialmente treinadas para operar as máquinas. Assim como a máquina tem uma especialização, normalmente o trabalhador irá se focar em fazer uma só tarefa e assim irá fazê-la melhor e mais rápido. Desta forma ele irá produzir mais, de forma mais eficiente e gerar mais lucro para seu empregador e conseqüentemente para ele próprio.¹³

Hephaestus created automatons in order to help him with different tasks. By giving each a specific ability and putting it in charge of a specific task, he was able to accomplish much more than he was able to do on his own. The Industrial Revolution put Hephaestus' idea into action, thanks to the arrival of new machines.

The machines made it possible to produce nonstop work, which before had to be done by many people. Like the automaton, each machine was specially designed to perform a specific task. However, the machine does not work by itself and there is also a need for people specially trained to operate the machine. Just as the machine has a specialty, so usually the worker will focus on doing one specific task, thus making it better and faster. Therefore, he will produce more, and more efficiently, generating more profit for his employer and consequently for himself.

As with most of the examples found in the course of this research, there is no indication from where the myth presented was taken. The myth is assumed to be known by the teacher and, as in the previous examples, the myth itself is not the focus. Instead, the myth is a tool to advance a political and/or educational agenda. In the present case, the myth of Hephaestus and the automatons is used to explain the idea behind the Industrial Revolution.

Two elements that are inherent in this explanation must, however, be pointed out. The first is the clear position regarding the Industrial Revolution. The fact that machines took over people's jobs, and the fact that people needed to specialize in one function, is presented as positive for both employers and employees. As detailed above, at this time Brazil was going through a period of economic growth, and there was a strong need for workers capable of understanding and operating machines, and for factory workers. This history lesson served to support this system, and there is an implication that the students should see themselves in it.

¹³ Romualdo Gontijo, "Hefeisto e os autômatos: os homens e as maquinas ontem e hoje. Trecho de atividade de história sobre a Revolução Industrial" [Hephaestus and the Automatons: Men and Machine, Yesterday and Today. Fragment of a History Assignment about the Industrial Revolution], in *Caderno de atividades de história geral* [General History Activity Book], Campinas: Pioneira, 1962.

The second point that should be made is that, notwithstanding the clear political agenda, the myth appeared as something living and somehow timeless. When the writer says that the Industrial Revolution put Hephaestus' plan into action, it is implied that the myth is not just an ancient element but something that can teach contemporary society about its present and future. The fact that the Industrial Revolution was presented in such a positive light enhanced the importance of the myth as not only something from the past but having a life of its own.

The second example is, unfortunately, less descriptive. In a geography lesson plan, the following entry was found: "Triptólemo e o valor do trabalhador rural" [Triptolemus and the Value of the Agricultural Worker].¹⁴ Nothing more than the title was found, but, from the title, it can safely be assumed that it was intended to be a lesson about the importance and value of agricultural workers. Industrialization in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s caused a radical change with regard to agricultural workers. Eliseu Alves, Geraldo da Silva e Souza, and Renner Marra note that in 1960, 17.4% of the urban population in Brazil was originally from rural areas and arrived in the cities as a result of internal migrations.¹⁵ Working in the city was perceived as being more lucrative, providing more options, and giving a better perspective on life in general. Furthermore, the increasing use of machines led to a scarcity of work, especially for those who were uneducated.

An informed guess regarding the motives for the exhortation of the agricultural worker would suggest that this line of work was being increasingly perceived as something inferior and unworthy. This popular perception ran against the economic interests of the country – agriculture was and still is one of the main products of Brazil – and it might well be that the teacher was trying to at least present the students with another view of the topic, if not trying to pull them in line with the spirit of the time. It was probably considered that using the figure of Triptolemus would boost the importance of agriculture as a whole, and its workers in particular, giving it a noble and divine association.

¹⁴ Arquivo do Colégio Estadual Souza Soares [Archives of the Souza Soares State School], "O mito de Triptolemo e o valor do camponês. Plano de aula de geografia" [The Myth of Triptolemus and the Value of the Peasant: Geography Lesson Plan], *Caderno de atividades do Professor Aléssio Pederneiras* [Activity Book of Professor Aléssio Pederneiras], document no. 118, Rio de Janeiro, 1961.

¹⁵ Eliseu Alves, Geraldo da Silva e Souza, and Renner Marra, "Êxodo e sua contribuição à urbanização de 1950 a 2010" [The Exodus and Its Contribution to Urbanization from 1950 to 2010], *Revista de Política Agrícola* [Journal of Agricultural Policy] 20.2 (2011), 80–88.

Education and the use of mythology in this period may, therefore, be summarized as follows:

1. The ideological struggle between the communist and liberal left and the conservative and religious right influenced the official educational policies. In the first half of the period, the right had more influence, and after 1945 the balance shifted to the left.
2. Mythology was used as a tool to promote the values perceived as important by the educational mentality *en vogue* at the time.
3. Latin stopped being mandatory and, as will be argued below, this marked the beginning of a decline in the use of classical mythology.

5. From Military Rule to the 1996 Education Law: 1961–1996

In the 1960 elections, Brazilians could vote for the president and the vice-president separately. As a result, a right-leaning president (Jânio Quadros) and a left-leaning vice-president (João Goulart, also known as Jango) came to power. The president resigned less than one year after, and the country entered a period of turmoil because of the relationship between the new president, Goulart, and the communists.

Following Cuba's revolution, organized groups attempted to take power in the country, carrying out attacks against civilians and military forces. These groups had sympathizers among the intellectual elite, if not regarding their methods, at least regarding their goal. As the new president grew even closer to the communists and made clear his intention to promulgate laws that would give the government power, among other controversial actions, to take land away from people, he lost support. Opposed by the mainstream media, which openly asked him to resign, by a large part of the civil society, and by his own military, and fearing for his safety, the president ended up fleeing the country in 1964, and in the same year Congress voted to put the military in power.

Concerning education, there was open fear on the part of the teachers, in particular until 1979 when the Amnesty Law was passed, of being associated with, or seen as a sympathizer of, the communists. However, while it could be expected that in 1964 the new military government would repeal the educational law that had been instituted by the left-wing president, and would again swing the pendulum towards a more conservative education, in reality a new law came only in 1971, and the modifications were few: a mandatory

course on civics was introduced, religious education became optional (instead of non-existent as had been the case previously), and physical education and arts became mandatory. Nevertheless, as a continuation of the previous period, education retained a strong technical/industrial direction, as Brazil continued to enjoy economic growth and accelerated industrialization. The reason for this was the “pressure cooker” doctrine of General Golbery do Couto e Silva, head of Brazil’s Intelligence Service at the time, which held that there should be some space for the communists and their supporters to vent their ideas. Notwithstanding the censorship that happened in public schools during the first half of the military period, the humanities as a whole were little by little shifting culturally towards what today is called the cultural left.

When it comes to the use of mythology in this period, two different categories can be distinguished. The first is a continuation of what was done before, that is, encouraging industrial and agricultural work. The second is geared towards values that were advocated by the regime in power. A manual of instruction for teachers of the People Studies Centre at Nova Friburgo School¹⁶ mentions Hesiod’s *Works and Days* in order to encourage the students to enjoy contact with nature and appreciate working the soil. In this material, teachers are encouraged to arouse reflection and thoughts in the students, recognizing the effort of the workers, both those in factories and the agricultural labourers, with emphasis on the latter.

Another example is found in the material created during the period of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) agreements in 1971, in a module of Programmed Learning of History. This module highlights excerpts from Virgil’s *Aeneid* in which elements of national bravery can be found, as well as the designation of courage and virility as values to be reinforced through illustrative pedagogical activities:

Professor, depois de ler a primeira parte da *Eneida* de Virgílio, enquanto contempla o mar e a sua terra, desenvolva uma atividade de redação encorajando os alunos a escrever os motivos pelos quais vale a pena lutar pela terra, mesmo estando longe de casa.¹⁷

¹⁶ Arquivo do Centro de Estudos de Pessoal do Colégio Nova Friburgo [Archives of the People Studies Centre of Nova Friburgo School], Centro de Estudos de Pessoal do Colégio Nova Friburgo, 1967, uncatalogued.

¹⁷ Proedes Arquivo Temático com relação ao MEC/USAID [Proedes Thematic Archive Related to MEC/USAID], Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1971.

Teacher, after reading the first part of the *Aeneid* of Virgil, while contemplating the sea and your land, develop an essay activity encouraging the students to write down the reasons for which it is worth fighting for their land even when they are far away from home.

The military period was also marked by pronounced encouragement of sport. In the same archive, an example was found aimed at the physical education teacher, using a legendary story to explain the Hans Selye General Adaptation Syndrome applied to physical training.¹⁸ The example given is that of Milo carrying a calf on his back since its birth. Milo became used to it, and as the calf got bigger and became a bull, Milo became the strongest man. This story is used to demonstrate that in order to achieve mastery in speed or power, one must train and gradually increase the intensity of the training. The legend here serves both as an educational tool and as an exhortation to value physical prowess, giving an impression that if one tried hard enough, there would be no limits.¹⁹

From the promulgation of the Amnesty Law, Marxist-oriented teachers became more influential and gradually a shift becomes apparent; from an education that focused on the values of work and nationalism, there is a move to one that critiqued the condition of the worker and also the power and class struggle between the poor and the rich. This change began at the end of the military rule and grew in force until the enactment of a new educational law in 1996.

6. A Partial Conclusion and an Example of a Brazilian Myth

Drawing on the evidence presented here, it may be established that during these different periods, Greek and classical mythology were used in a very particular way in Brazil. During the period reviewed, even though the

¹⁸ General Adaptation Syndrome is a model used to explain how biological organisms adapt according to the stress they undergo. When it comes to physical training, an exercise which reaches a certain threshold causes stress to the body. During rest, the body recovers and adapts, i.e. makes itself more able to endure a similar exercise. This is the most basic principle in physical training. For the model, see Hans Selye, "Stress and the General Adaptation Syndrome", *British Medical Journal* 1.4667 (17 June 1950), 1383-1392.

¹⁹ Acervo do Colégio Conselheiro Josino [Collection of Conselheiro Josino School], *Diário escolar de professor de educação física* [School Diary of a Physical Education Teacher], series H.131.2, Itaboraí, 1968.

teaching of Graeco-Roman mythology was not part of an official syllabus, it made its way into the course of study through the curricula in literature, Latin, history, geography, civics, and even physical education. The myths were re-interpreted according to the current political/ideological view of education at each stage.

As a final illustration, an example of a figure used in different ways for more than a century, according to the ideological view of the various periods. Joaquim José da Silva Xavier (1746–1792), known as Tiradentes, was a revolutionary leader of a movement which wanted to break away from Portuguese rule and declare independence. The movement was suppressed by Portugal, and Tiradentes was executed publicly and his body dismembered. In 1890, one year after the beginning of the Republic, the date of his execution (21 April) was proclaimed a national holiday,²⁰ and Tiradentes was praised as a man who had understood what was just for the Brazilian people, and as an example of a man who embodied the values of the doctrine of positivism, which was popular at the time. The Vargas government also praised Tiradentes, focusing on the military aspect of his life, and set him up as the patron of the Civil and Military Police in Brazil. During the military period, Tiradentes was highlighted as an example of one who took his civic duty as far as death when it was necessary. He was named the Civic Patron by General Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, the first military president after Jango relinquished power.

Before turning to Tiradentes's portrayal by the Marxists, it should be noted that in 1893 Tiradentes was painted in a way that consciously echoed Jesus (see Fig. 1). There are many elements which superimpose Tiradentes on Jesus: his appearance, the cross, the place where his quartered body stands, which is suggestive of an altar, and the position of his body parts, in a pattern that references other Christian works. Furthermore, his body is arranged in a shape that is similar to the Brazilian map. This iconography has been maintained ever since, and in practically all descriptions in books Tiradentes is graphically portrayed in a way that is reminiscent of Jesus.

Under the Marxists, in the 1980s, the iconography continued in a similar vein. However, the values upon which they chose to focus were different. The Marxist-oriented teachers presented the episode as an example of Brazil itself, fighting for its authenticity and for the poor.

²⁰ The holiday is still celebrated in contemporary Brazil.

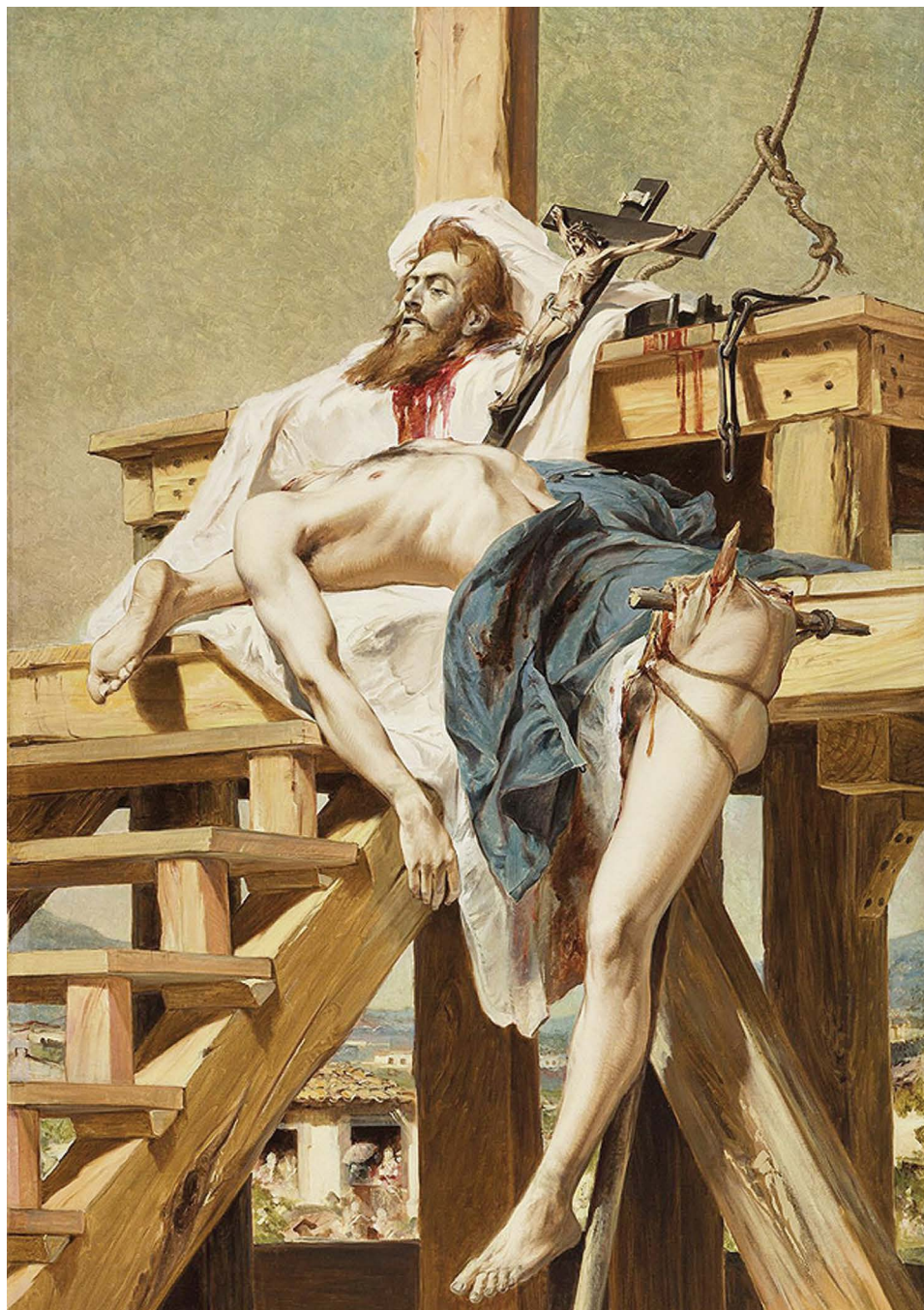


Figure 1: Pedro Américo, *Tiradentes Esquartejado* (1893), Mariano Procópio Museum. Scan by Dornicke from MAPRO: O Museu Mariano Procópio, São Paulo: Banco Safra, 2006, Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain.

This interpretation emphasizes how Tiradentes was betrayed by the bourgeoisie, who sold him to the Portuguese in exchange for money, making them traitors of the whole country and particularly of the poor. They stress that only through this revolution was Brazil later able to become independent from Portugal, turning Tiradentes into an example of a revolutionary leader.²¹ Thus, in a history book for teachers, written by Flávio Gomes and published by Melhoramentos, which was mandatory in elementary schools, the following statement can be found:

Tiradentes, o mártir da Conspiração de Minas Gerais, lutou para a independência do Brasil, sacrificando a sua vida para que o povo não empobrecesse ou sofresse com a dominação portuguesa e para que houvesse um mundo melhor no futuro. Proponha aos alunos uma atividade de redação sobre o valor do sacrifício e do altruísmo para um bem maior.²²

Tiradentes, the martyr of the Minas Gerais Conspiracy, fought for Brazil's independence, sacrificing his life so that the people would not be impoverished or suffer from Portuguese domination, and so that there could be a better world in the future. Suggest that the students write an essay about the values of sacrifice and altruism for a greater good.

Brazil is a very Christian country and so the association with Jesus, and particularly with Jesus' crucifixion, makes Tiradentes a Brazilian hero in the eyes of the people. Once he is portrayed as a hero, the discourse about Tiradentes becomes one about the ideological movement which is promoting it. Tiradentes, then, becomes a myth, being redefined through the lens of each, and being used to enhance a political/ideological discourse, just as Graeco-Roman mythology.

7. Epilogue: From 1996 to the Present

This study is very much a preliminary investigation, limited by the fact that some of the internally produced materials, such as student essays and teacher plans, have mostly not yet arrived at the big archive centres. Obtaining

²¹ This description is still present today in most didactic books on Brazilian history.

²² Flávio Gomes, *Manual do professor da história do Brasil* [History of Brazil: Teacher's Manual], São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 1981, 68.

the material directly from the schools is hampered by their reticence and fear of scrutiny, which could put the school or its board in a bad light.

Nevertheless, it is possible to present this last period broadly. The 1996 education law and its 2003 amendment were strongly influenced by Marxist-oriented educators and marked a departure from everything previously noted with regard to classical mythology. The law is explicit in stating that Afro-Brazilian culture, history, and elements must be taught in the literature, arts, and history courses. This came on the heels of the opposition of the Frankfurt School and Antonio Gramsci to traditional Western values. Graeco-Roman mythology has commonly been perceived as a representative of such culture and has largely been relegated to the background and replaced by other values. It is possible to see this shift by considering the requests for books to be officially endorsed by the government, where some requests were denied under the heading "Não ajuda a promover a diversidade" (Does not help to promote diversity).

This rejection of Graeco-Roman mythology as Western imperialism can be illustrated by a conversation the authors had with a high school philosophy teacher. He explained that while he teaches Plato's myth of the cave, he also explains how the light and the truth can be read as a metaphor for one "right" culture, the one which saw the light, which desires to impose itself on the unenlightened. He ends his lesson with a debate about whether the "unenlightened" were right to react against their friend who was trying to impose the truth on them.

The pendulum at present has swung to the left, and while this trend has gained even more adherents, there is a countermovement that is trying to resurrect the importance of studying Graeco-Roman literature, including mythology. This movement began with the philosopher Olavo de Carvalho, known as "Olavo" in Brazil, who alone managed to persuade about 20,000 students to enrol in his online philosophy courses. He is responsible for the creation of a conservative movement, which elected a president who has very different views on education from his predecessors. Olavo himself has written books and essays about the importance of myths,²³ and it is possible that this will influence the public policy in the coming years and maybe move the pendulum in the other direction once more.

²³ Olavo de Carvalho, *Dialética simbólica* [Symbolic Dialectics], São Paulo: Vide Editorial, 2015; Olavo de Carvalho, *História essencial da filosofia* [Essential History of Philosophy], 32 vols., São Paulo: É Realizações, 1998.