



## CHALLENGES IN MODERN EDUCATION BY HANNAH ARENDT: RELATIONS WITH BRAZILIAN EDUCATION

### *CHALLENGES IN MODERN EDUCATION BY HANNAH ARENDT: RELATIONS WITH BRAZILIAN EDUCATION*

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#### SUMMARY:

This writing aims to provide a critical analysis of the work "The Crisis in Education" by Hannah Arendt, focusing on educational decadence in the United States as an intrinsic facet of the challenges faced in the 20th century, aligning its perceptions with the Brazilian reality. The author highlights the continued deterioration of educational standards as a latent threat, while criticizing the illusion of forging a new world through education, including an exploration of the influence of equality in American society. The methodological approach adopted is bibliographic analysis, through the use of historical, philosophical and sociological arguments extracted from the alleged work. It is emphasized how relevant these characteristics are today in view of the needs for changes in the Brazilian educational system. The purpose of this research is to contribute to a better understanding of Arendt's work, providing a solid theoretical basis aimed at contemporary reflections on the obstacles present in the educational scenario in Brazil. Its analysis goes beyond a mere bibliographical review by proposing relevant approaches to the areas of education. Therefore, the article is organized into two distinct moments, one that analyzes Hannah Arendt's work, and the other that brings this reality to the Brazilian educational context.

**Keywords:** Crisis in Education; Hannah Arendt; Contemporary Reflections.

#### ABSTRACT

This writing aims to provide a critical analysis of the work "The Crisis in Education" by Hannah Arendt, focusing on educational decadence in the United States as an intrinsic facet of the challenges faced in the 20th century, aligning its perceptions with the Brazilian reality. The author highlights the continued deterioration of educational standards as a latent threat, while criticizing the illusion of forging a new world through education, including an exploration of the influence of equality in American society. The methodological approach adopted is bibliographic analysis, through the use of historical, philosophical and sociological arguments extracted from the alleged work. It is emphasized how relevant these characteristics are today in view of the needs for changes in the Brazilian educational system. The purpose of this research is to contribute to a better understanding of Arendt's work, providing a solid theoretical basis at aimed contemporary reflections on the obstacles present in the educational scenario in Brazil. Its analysis goes beyond a mere bibliographical review by proposing relevant approaches to the areas of education. Therefore, the article is organized into two distinct moments, one that analyzes Hannah Arendt's work, and the other that brings this reality to the Brazilian educational context.

**Keywords:** Education Crisis; Hannah Arendt; Contemporary Reflections.

#### INTRODUCTION

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Hannah Arendt, in her analysis of the crisis in modern education, highlights the complexity of this phenomenon, highlighting the contemporary difficulty in guaranteeing the minimum conservation necessary for the educational aspect. The author highlights the crisis of authority in education, strongly linked to the transformation in attitude towards the past, which was once revered as a model. In a world where authority and tradition have lost their influence, the aforementioned area faces the challenge of operating in this new context.

Arendt argues that schools should focus on teaching children what the world is, clearly separating the domain of education from others, especially the political sphere. Ultimately, the author highlights the educational responsibility in preserving and renewing the world, this being the point where we decide whether we love the world enough to take responsibility for it.



This article, which is a literature review, which despite having the title of the article as reference, was also based on other authors to be able to compose the mosaic that brings the findings made by author Hannah Arendt, to the specific reality of our country.

Thus, the article is divided into two central topics, the first presents a deep and critical analysis of Hannah Arendt's work, which provides an overview of the crisis that North American education has experienced in recent decades. Then, there is an intersection between these findings and the national reality regarding education.

## CHALLENGES IN MODERN EDUCATION

In her text, entitled "The Crisis in Education", Hannah Arendt addresses the widespread decadence that afflicts the modern world, with a special focus on the periodic crisis in education in the United States. Arendt (2009) highlights that the constant drop in elementary standards throughout the school system represents a clear danger, and the authorities' efforts to control the situation indicate the seriousness of the problem.

When comparing this problem in education with the political experiences of the 20th century in other countries, such as the revolutionary waves and the horrors of concentration camps, it is argued that the temptation to consider it as a local phenomenon, disconnected from the broader problems of the century, is mistaken (Arendt, 2009).

The education crisis in the United States has become a political issue, challenging the notion that it is just a local problem with no global equivalence. Arendt (2009) highlights the importance of education in America due to its nature as a land of immigrants, where the Americanization of children plays a vital role in the fusion of diverse ethnic groups. Continuous immigration and the search for a new world order mean that this area has an incomparably more important political function in America than in other countries (Arendt, 2009).

The illusion of building a new world through the education of children is discussed, with emphasis on the American nature of believing in the possibility of founding a new order with an awareness of a historical continuum. However, Arendt (2009) warns that this illusion does not reflect the true situation and that the world that children enter is, in reality, an old world.

The problem in American education is further aggravated by the uncritical adoption of European educational theories, which revolutionized the educational system, eliminating the rules of healthy human reason. The lack of truly secondary education and the pressure to equalize all children have negative impacts on educational quality and college readiness (Arendt, 2009).

The influence of the concept of equality on American society and how the attempt to create a meritocracy, although seen as an advancement elsewhere, is considered intolerable in the United States. Hannah Arendt highlights the complexity of the decline in American education, relating it to its unique political nature, the illusion of building a new world and the incessant search for equality that directly affects the educational system. From this point, Arendt (2009) comments on the contemporary educational situation, exposing three fundamental ideas responsible for contributing to the catastrophic state in which the world finds itself.

The first of these is the idea of creating a "child's world" separate from adult society. In this context, children are seen as autonomous beings capable of managing themselves, which ends up breaking the normal relationships between children and adults. Arendt (2009, p. 5) argues: "The role of adults must then consist of limiting themselves to watching this process."

The second idea refers to teaching, influenced by modern psychology, disconnected from the subject to be taught. Teacher training has neglected competence in the subject, resulting in a teacher without legitimate authority. Therefore, Arendt (2009, p. 5) highlights: "The non-authoritarian teacher, the one that, counting on the authority that his competence could confer on him, he would want to refrain from any authoritarianism, can no longer exist."

The third idea, related to modern learning theory, proposes replacing learning with action, favoring playful activities over serious work. Arendt (2009, p. 6) criticizes this approach, stating that the application of this idea to education is as primitive as it is evident: replacing, as much as possible, learning with doing." The consequence of these ideas is the exclusion of children from the adult world, subjecting them to the tyranny of the peer group and restricting their development.

Arendt (2009) points to the crisis in education in the United States and the need for a reform that reestablishes the teacher's authority, returns to serious work in the classroom and rethinks the pedagogical approach.

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logic centered on doing. The author also emphasizes that education is an essential activity in human society, continually renewing itself with the birth of new human beings.

She highlights the duality in the approach to the child, “object of education”, where the child shares the state of becoming with all living beings, but at the same time is new in relation to an already existing world. “She is a new human being and is on the way to becoming a human being” (Arendt, 2009, p. 7).

Parents play an important role in educating their descendants, caring not only for the lives and development of their children, but also being essential for the protection and continuity of the world. However, Arendt (2009) reports that such responsibilities can enter into contradictions, as the child needs to be protected from the world, while the world needs to be protected from the potentially destructive influence of new generations.

The family is considered an important refuge, where “adults return each day from the outside world and unite in the security of private life” (Arendt, 2009, p. 7). These four walls provide protection against the world and its public aspect, essential for the flourishing of life.

The criticism of the contemporary educational system is expressed when Arendt (2009, p. 8) highlights that “modern education, insofar as it tries to establish a world of children's own, destroys the necessary conditions for their development and growth”, thus having a noticeable discrepancy between the opportunity to guarantee the child's well-being and the absence of effective initiatives to guarantee favorable conditions for their development.

In this way, Arendt (2009, p. 9) reveals the visible resistance of some adults to taking responsibility for the world into which they brought children. This refusal becomes clear with the decrease in authority perceived in today's society, reflected in the area of education and the lack of guidance for new generations in an uncertain world. According to the author, the difficulty lies in contemporary times, where it is “extremely difficult to guarantee this minimum of conservation and conservation attitude without which education is simply not possible” (Arendt, 2009, p. 11).

The education system, which historically benefited from a strong tradition and the unquestioned authority of the past, now faces the challenge of operating in a world where authority and tradition have lost their influence. Arendt (2009, p. 12) highlights the change in the relationship with the past when stating that, “over the centuries, [...] considering the past as the past as a model; in any case, take ancestors as guiding examples for their descendants.” However, in modern times this attitude towards the past has been transformed, creating an additional difficulty for educators.

Arendt (2009) defends the idea that schools should prioritize teaching children about what the world is like, rather than guiding them in the art of living. She emphasizes the importance of establishing a clear demarcation between the educational sphere and other sectors, especially in the sphere of public political life. In this context, the function of the school lies in transmitting knowledge of the world to children, considering the influence of the past... In his words, “the function of the school is to teach children what the world is and not to initiate them into art of living” (Arendt, 2009, p. 13).

Ultimately, Arendt (2009) highlights the importance of education in safeguarding the world. She emphasizes education as an essential point in which we decide whether we really love the world enough to take responsibility for it, ensuring its constant updating through the arrival of new generations. In her words, “education is also the place where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world, leaving them to fend for themselves” (Arendt, 2009, p. 13).

## THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

After understanding the author's perspective on the education crisis that the United States went through, it was necessary to bring this reality to our country, so that a real panorama of these crises could be created. experienced in a country of continental size such as Brazil.

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According to Ribeiro (2009), the Brazilian educational system has faced significant challenges over the last few decades, reflecting a complex interaction of social, economic and political factors. This crisis in Brazilian education is multifaceted and manifests itself at different levels, from infrastructure to deeper issues, such as persistent inequalities. Given this scenario, there is an urgent need to reinvent both the school and the role of the teacher to promote effective transformations.

One of the main issues is inequality in access to quality education. While

Some regions of the country have well-equipped institutions and trained teachers, others face structural deficiencies, lack of resources and inadequate conditions for learning. Socioeconomic disparity is directly reflected in educational opportunities offered to students, perpetuating cycles of inequality (ROMANELLI, 2013, p.109).

This for the author is expanded, as it is the responsibility of municipal and state education networks to organize and offer their respective teaching stages, which means that some networks are organized and teaching develops satisfactorily, and having disorganized networks, where the most affected are the students.

Furthermore, for Muzzeti and Silva (2017), the traditional teaching approach often proves to be obsolete in the face of contemporary demands. The model centered on the transmission of content, memorization and standardized assessment does not meet the needs of a society in constant evolution. Technology, for example, offers new learning possibilities, but it is necessary to integrate it effectively, ensuring that all students have equitable access to digital tools.

For these authors, the reinvention of the school is imperative. It is necessary to rethink the curricular structure, adopt more participatory teaching methods and encourage the development of critical, creative and collaborative skills. The school of the future must be an inclusive space, which recognizes and respects cultural and social diversity, promoting equal opportunities.

Likewise, the role of the teacher needs to be reviewed. Educators must be learning facilitators, encouraging autonomy and the search for knowledge. Continuing training is essential to enable teachers to deal with changes in the educational environment, incorporating new pedagogical practices and technologies.

Reinventing education in Brazil is not a simple task, but it is vital for the country's sustainable and equitable development. This requires a collective commitment, involving governments, communities, educational institutions and education professionals. Overcoming the educational crisis is an investment in the future, a path to building a fairer society prepared for the challenges of the 21st century.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Hannah Arendt, in her article "The Crisis in Education," addresses educational decay in the United States, highlighting the constant lowering of standards as an obvious danger. She contextualizes the crisis in education as part of broader challenges of the 20th century, criticizing the illusion of building a new world through education and the uncritical adoption of European theories.

Arendt highlights the unique importance of education in the USA, linked to the Americanization of children. The influence of the concept of equality in society is explored, highlighting challenges in the search for balance between different groups. His considerations point to the need for reform, restoring the teacher's authority and rethinking approaches centered on doing.

The responsibility of parents in preserving the world stands out, although Arendt points out contradictions, as the child needs to be protected from the world, while the world needs to be protected from the potentially destructive influence of new generations. The criticism of the contemporary educational system culminates in exposing the resistance of some adults to taking responsibility for the world into which they brought their children.

Arendt ends by emphasizing the importance of education as guardian of the world, highlighting the need to take responsibility through education, ensuring its constant renewal with the emergence of new generations. Ultimately, education is seen as the crucial space where we decide whether we love our children enough not to abandon them in the world, leaving them to fend for themselves.

What can be seen, when bringing this reality to our country, is that the educational crisis faced by Brazil in recent decades demands urgent and coordinated action to significantly transform the school and the role of the teacher. Inequality in access to education, combined with outdated pedagogical models, highlights the pressing need for structural and conceptual reinvention.

The school of the future must be inclusive, adaptable and focused on the integral development of students. before, preparing them to face the challenges of a society in constant evolution. The reinvention of schools cannot occur in isolation; it requires effective collaboration between governments, communities, educators and other interested parties.

Likewise, the role of the teacher takes on a new dimension, going beyond the mere transmission of knowledge to become a guide and facilitator of the learning process. Continuing training



It becomes essential to enable them to face changes, incorporating innovative practices and technologies that enhance student development.

Investing in overcoming the educational crisis is, therefore, investing in the future of Brazil. Transformative education is the key to building a more fair, equal society prepared for the complex challenges of the 21st century. The reinvention of education is a collective commitment that aims not only to correct deficiencies in the present, but also to build the foundations for a more promising and sustainable future for future generations.

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