

Culture and Cultural Action¹
Policies, Cultural Rights and Multiculturalism

A contribution to their stories and concepts

Newton Cunha

¹ Originally published by Edições Sesc, São Paulo, 2010.

Meanings of the term culture

The understanding offered by 19th century anthropology to the concept of culture is not the oldest, perhaps not even the best, but it is certainly the broadest. It corresponds to all the collective and socially arbitrary or artificial ways in which men respond to their natural needs. This means that the word culture encompasses the social relations and the material and symbolic ways of life of a society, including characteristics and economic values, techniques, political structures, ethical-moral behaviors, beliefs, educational forms and artistic creations. When Burnett Tylor defined it in his work *Primitive Culture* (1871), he emphasized the character of “acquired habits”, as opposed to “instinctive or natural habits”: *Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.*

A century after Tylor, Pierre Bourdieu² used three terms that, taken together, suggest a more complex concept, although close to that of the English anthropologist: structure, habitus and practices. The first concerns those regularities that are associated with institutions and social environments (modes of production and consumption of material or abstract goods, family relationships, etc.). Such structures produce *habitus*, which is a way of being, a “system of durable dispositions ... capable of functioning as structuring phenomena, that is, as principles of generation and structuring of practices”, and which over time ends up unconsciously functioning as a principle at the

² *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, Librairie Droz, Genève, 1972.

same time arbitrary, internalized or subjective (*Parler d'habitus c'est poser que l'individuel, et même le personnel, le subjectif, est social, collectif. L'habitus est une subjectivité socialisée*). Finally, practices are the dialectical result between a structure and a habitus in the face of a real or concrete situation.

As can easily be seen, the definition given by the social sciences leaves nothing outside this cultural environment, constituting an integral phenomenon of a collectivity. It means a patrimony that is at once material and intellectual, shared and relatively stable, composed of: language, forms of behavior and thought that give meaning to human or divine relationships, representative symbols, techniques employed and objects produced. Whether one is aware of it or not, man manifests himself as a cultural being, thus differentiating himself from all other living beings. It should also be realized that this concept remains neutral, that is, it does not stipulate a scale of positive or negative values before the way of life of a society. It is rather about collective and anonymous characteristics of a people or social group, created and transmitted from generation to generation.

If we link, however, this conception of culture to that of evolution or development, we can then suggest, in general lines, the existence of three types of culture: a first type that did not propose or did not incorporate, by itself, the idea of development, like the Brazilian indigenous culture. In this case, we are facing a static or stationary culture. A second type would be one that, although it has changed in some aspects, such as materials, it retains symbolic and/or behavioural traits of past times, of ancestral traditions, such as, among others, and still today, Islamic, Indian and African tribal cultures. Here we find cultures that we could call semi-static. Finally, that culture that has become a kind of arrow of time, emphasizing

conquests and permanent transformations, and that marked Western Europe from, above all, the Renaissance. In a way, the phenomenon of globalization corresponds to a worldwide extension of these principles, objectives and values, guided today by the capitalist mode of production.

Thus, there are, or at least were already, cultures that do not have or did not have the development or transformation as a prospect or ideal to be pursued, or as a process to be realized. And others, like ours, Western, where the accumulation of wealth, the technical domain and the transformations of any structure or field of action ended up imposing themselves as values, objectives and historical processes. If we agree with Max Weber's analyses, the main distinction of our culture, when compared to others, is to be *rationalist* in all spheres of theoretical knowledge and practical action.

Still within this socio-anthropological understanding, it is inferred that cultural development constitutes a change or alteration: a) in the forms of control and use of the means of material production; b) in the creation, structures and dissemination of theoretical knowledge and practical experiments; c) in the meanings of existence and social behaviour, as well as in the symbolic representations of society.

A second understanding of the word culture has to do with its semantic origin. It is the action of caring for and cultivating, no longer the earth, the field, but the spirit, the intellect, the knowledge, the aesthetic sensibility or the memory of an important fact and whose deed has imposed itself as epic or extraordinary. That is why Francis Bacon considered it the "georgic of the spirit", remembering that *georgia* is the Greek term for cultivated land.³

³ *De augmentis scientiarum*, book VII.

The same meaning applies to the terms *cultivated* and *cult*. On the one hand, as a participle of the verb *colere*, it indicates care, attention to language and even to the body and health. For example: *quid tam dignum cultu?* - what things are so worthy of our care? From another, as a noun, it applies both to someone who cultivates the whole of knowledge (*cultura animi philosophia est, haec extrahit vitia radicitus: est profecto animi medicina medetur animis* - philosophy is the culture of the soul, and extracts vice through the roots: is undoubtedly the medicine by which souls heal themselves),⁴ as for those rituals that preserve the memory of ancestors, of a relevant historical event or a narrative of a supernatural and religious nature (*erudire ad cultum deorum* - teaching to honour the gods). In this case, culture alludes, that is, it relates to the symbolic and social universes, that is, to the truth of a knowledge, to the good of a moral action and to the beauty of an artistic representation. Unlike the notion of anthropology, this idea of culture indicates attributes or qualities that people, individually, or society can have to a greater or lesser degree, more or less perfected, more or less effective. In Greek, it would correspond to the continuous effort of the *paideia*, a term that conjugates the integral formation of a person to a common project of life, and which we can find in the funeral prayer of Pericles, Thucydides' version: " We have a peculiar power to think before we act, and to act too, while other men are brave out of ignorance, but hesitate to reflect ... We are lovers of beauty without extravagance and lovers of philosophy without indolence. We use wealth more as an opportunity to act than as a reason for vainglory; among us there is no shame in poverty, but the greatest shame is not to do everything possible to avoid it ... In

⁴ Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes*, livro II, 13.5, quoted by John Leland in *The Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation*, vol. II, pg. 72, ed. Anthony Finley, Philadelphia, 1818.

short, I say that our city, as a whole, is the school of all Hellas (*paideusis*) and that, it seems to me, each man among us could, by his own personality, show himself to be self-sufficient in the most varied forms of activity, with the greatest elegance and naturalness. And this is not mere ufanism inspired by the occasion, but the real truth, attested by the very strength of our city, acquired as a result of these qualities".⁵

If the Greek before the sixth century understood the human condition as inferior to that of the divinity, since man is ephemeral (*brotos*), while the gods are immortal (*athanatoi*), the influence of philosophy and sophistic introduced the opposition "Greek, educated" versus "Asian, barbaric" and, from then on, the idea of a human superiority coming from education, political life and philanthropy. Isocrates, quoted here by Bruno Snell,⁶ reaffirms the difference between man and animal through the use of the word and the possibility of persuasion, with which laws, arts and crafts were developed, "because you, above others, are distinguished in that faculty by which man is distinguished from the animal and the Greek from the barbarian; in the measure that, more than others, you are educated to reasoning and to the art of the word". In the Latin universe, this concept leads us to *excolere animum* (cultivation of the soul) and to *humanitas*, that is to say, to the education or formation of man, in which are included, simultaneously, the self-control (self-knowledge), the understanding of nature, the moral exercise and the participation in public life. For this reason the saying of Aristipo, collected by Diogenes Laercio, is understood: "It is better to be a

⁵ *History of the Peloponnesian War*, portuguese version, Brasilia University, Funag, Imesp, 2001.

⁶ *The Greek Origins of European Thought*, portuguese version, Perspectiva, 2001.

beggar than an ignoramus; for that one, lacks money, for this one, humanity (*antropopismós*)”.

Imagining this perfect cultural condition, wrote T.S. Eliot: “There are several kinds of attainment which we may have in mind in different contexts. We may be thinking of refinement of manners – or urbanity and civility. We may be thinking of learning and a close acquaintance with the accumulate wisdom of the past... We may be thinking of philosophy with the widest sense – an interest in, and some ability to manipulate, abstract ideas... And we may be thinking of the arts... If we look at the several activities of culture listed in the preceding paragraph, we must conclude that no perfection in one of them, to the exclusion of the others, can confer culture on anybody. We know that good manners, without education, intellect or sensibility to the arts, tends towards mere automatismo; that learning without good manners and sensibility is pedantry; that intellectual ability without the more human attributes is admirable only in the same way as the brilliance of a child chess prodigy; and that the arts without intellectual context are vanity”.⁷

The classical sense of culture linked collective life to private life, that is, it sought to establish a common sense between society and the individual. In the Renaissance environment, the cultural marks of contemplation and public action began to include active life, that is, work and scientific application, causing culture to be mixed with a search of a polytechnic or encyclopedic nature. Also for this reason, between the material means and the personal, collective or institutional ends of society, there should not be a rupture, an absence of link and complementarity. In fact, Georg Simmel's critique of

⁷ *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, Harcourt, Brace and Co., NY, 1949.

contemporary culture (an analysis made at the end of the First World War in *The Conflict of Modern Culture*) is based precisely on the multiplication of factors or intermediary instances between objective creations and the individual's capacity to connect them and give them coherence, as well as on the autonomization of bureaucratic techniques and processes. With this, the individual and collective life cease to be purposes and both assume a submissive condition of means.

At the same time, this narrower conception bequeathed to us by antiquity sees in things of the spirit, in immaterial or symbolic actions, a compensation to the real world, which is at the same time a harsh, limited, painful or even insensitive and competitive world, precisely because of its constant immediacy, the compulsion of primary needs, because it is tied to an overly raw reality, to deceptive or ephemeral relationships, to situations of injustice. In contrast, the world of culture, which would be that of contemplation, wisdom, memory, good, truth and beauty, may be only ideal or illusory, but it escapes what Plato already wrote in the *Laws*: "the just order of the soul is destroyed by the greed for wealth, which occupies men to the point of having no time for anything but concern for their property. The citizen commits himself to this with all his soul, so that he thinks of nothing but daily gain".⁸

It is possible to find in some authors a distinction between two spheres of human actions, as Marcuse points out in his text *On the affirmative character of culture*: one that responds to material needs and purposes, more ordinary and immediate, and which the author calls civilization; the other, which is beyond those needs, opening

⁸ Portuguese version, Edipro, São Paulo, 1999.

itself to spiritual perspectives of knowledge, ideological formations, psychic satisfaction, fun, liberated or less committed to a compulsory purpose - this second sphere would be that of culture. On the one hand, in the Marxist way, it is a secondary process or one derived from an infrastructure. On the other hand, art, and here we could include philosophy, contemplation and celebration, are proposed as remedies (*pharmakon*) for the tragic character of life, as lenitives or consolations for the ordinary sufferings of the soul.

There are authors who give the understanding of culture a sense of *evolution and improvement*, as opposed to an original situation of barbarism (Hobbes, the most Enlightenment authors, Herder or Ortega y Gasset, for example); and others who see it as *sublimation, loss of naturalness or of an original idyllic state*: Jean de Léry (*Journey to the Land of Brazil*), Montaigne (*Sur les Cannibales*), Rousseau (*Discours sur les origines de l'inégalité*), Nietzsche (*Birth of Tragedy*) or Freud (*Kultur und Unbehagen*).

Johann Herder, for example, writes: "The human being is, in the most noble sense that can be attributed to him, predisposed to culture and language. Close to the ground, all the senses of man had only a small range and the lower ones stood out in comparison to the more refined ones, as shown by the example of the wild man. Smell and taste were, as in animals, their conductors. Erect, however, over the land and vegetation, the sense of smell no longer predominates, but vision; with it, a wider realm unfolds around him; and it improves already in childhood with a geometry of finer lines and colors ... With the formation of his upright walking, the man acquired free and artistic hands, tools of elaborate manipulation and a permanent touch to

develop new ideas and clear. In this sense, Helvetius is right: man's hand was offered to him as a great aid to Reason".⁹

On the contrary, Nietzsche opines: "The metaphysical consolation that life, at the bottom of things, despite all the changes in phenomenal appearances, is indestructibly powerful and full of joy; and that consolation appears clearly in the satirical chorus, as a chorus of natural beings who live indestructible behind all civilization ... with which fearless claw the Greek would take his natural man ... Nature, in which he did not yet work no knowledge, in which the bolts of culture were still inviolate - this is what the Greek saw in the satyr ... It was the proto-image of man, the expression of his highest emotions ... his sight wandered with sublime satisfaction over the grandiose features of nature, not yet veiled or stunted; here the illusion of culture was erased from the proto-image of man ... Before him, civilized man was reduced to a lying caricature".¹⁰

Considering that the terms civilization and culture are sometimes used as synonymous expressions, it is worth noting that Norbert Elias, in his book *On the Process of Civilization, sociogenetic and psychogenetic investigations*, defends the idea that western civilization, especially since the Middle Ages, has constituted a progressive *domestication of natural impulses*. To this end, much has contributed, especially in France and England, the contamination that the rising bourgeoisie had of the behavioural habits of the aristocracy, the so-called court society. It was because this society knew how to open up and influence the bourgeoisie that its values could later be spread even among the lower or popular classes. And what habits

⁹ *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, book IV (digital version textlog.de.)

¹⁰ *The Birth of Tragedy*, portuguese version, Cia. Das Letras, São Paulo, 2001.

were those that expanded throughout society, making it, in its terms, civilized? Ways of behaving at table and eating, ways of speaking, according to the people one speaks to, ways of dressing, according to the environment to be frequented. In short, it was a matter of self-imposed habits of politeness, courtesy, respect and decency, of what came to be called good manners or civility. "This concept received its specific stamp and function discussed here in the second quarter of the 16th century. Your individual starting point can be precisely determined. He owes the specific meaning adopted by society to a short treatise written by Erasmus of Rotterdam, *De civilitate morum puerilium* (From civility in children), which came to light in 1530 ... Still during Erasmus' life, that is, in first six years after publication, it had more than 30 reissues. In total, there were more than 130 editions, 13 of which on a more recent date, such as the 18th century ... Erasmus's book deals with a very simple subject: the behavior of people in society and, above all, although not exclusively, 'external bodily decorum'. The civilizing process, therefore, corresponded to the development of social conventions, later added by daily sanitary practices, which signify an introjection or internalization of limits and common rules of coexistence.¹¹

Thus, words like civility and civilized began to be used more in the 17th century and Furetière's *Universal Dictionary* defined the term civility as an honest, sweet and polite way to act and talk. Montesquieu, in the *Spirit of the Laws*, recognizes that civility is what prevents us from externalizing our vices. As Lucien Febvre says, "throughout the 17th century, French authors have classified peoples according to a hierarchy that is at once vague and quite determined.

¹¹ Volume I, Chapter I, Jorge Zahar Ed., Rio de Janeiro, 1990.

At the lowest level, the savages. A little higher up, without a precise distinction between the two species, the barbarians. After that, having won a stage, we find the peoples possessing civility, politeness and, finally, a wise police" (*police* is understood as a set of laws aimed at the security of life, through morality, order and peaceful customs).¹²

In the following century, however, German intellectuals, committed to political ideas of social transformation, artistic forms and popular traditions, to the values of aesthetic romanticism, separated the concepts of civilization and culture. For civilization, they kept only the sense of urbanity, of politeness, of education of social habits and improvement of sensibility. Finally, the social behaviors. And for culture, a set of products created by science, technology, arts and religion. For this reason, Kant wrote in *Ideas about a Universal History, from the point of view of a world citizen* that "we are cultivated to a high level by the arts and sciences; we are civilized to exercise all kinds of decency and social conveniences". Thus, one could think of someone who was well educated, but uncultured; or cultured and rude.

In the 19th century, however, we find François Guizot's introductory exposition to his *General History of Civilization in Europe* in which the concept reaches its maximum extension. The historian says: "The etymology of the word (civilization) seems to respond in a clear and satisfactory way: it says that it is the improvement of civil life, the development of society and of the relations of men among themselves... when the word civilization is pronounced, a greater dynamism and better organization of social relations immediately

¹² *Civilisation, le mot et l'idée*, 1929 (digital version of Québec University, *Les Classiques des Sciences Sociales*).

come to mind: on the one hand, a growing production of instrumental means and well-being in society; on the other hand, a more equitable distribution among individuals, of the production force and of the goods produced. Is that all, gentlemen? Are we out of the usual natural sense of the word civilization? The instinct of men repudiates such a narrow definition of the destiny of humanity. It seems to you, in a first aspect, that the word civilization encompasses something more extensive, more complex, superior to the pure perfection of social relations... Another development that is not only that of social life is clearly manifested: the evolution of individual life, of inner life, of human faculties by man himself, of his feelings and ideas... The letters, the sciences and the arts extend all their brilliance. Everywhere the human race sees these great images shine ... it recognizes and gives it the name of civilization".¹³

And we can also use the word culture to refer to the ensemble formed by language, with its dialectal or prosodic variants, by the most evident social behaviours or daily habits and by those popular artistic or artisan creations that have become the hallmark of a group, a community, a people or populations, even those living in different political states.

From this point of view, culture is what gives a character, a kind of spiritual essence. By distinguishing, it identifies and transmits a feeling of mutual ethnic or national belonging. Hence also the idea that change or a real movement of transformation will erode the most salient features of this character, putting at risk an identity already built.

¹³ *Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe, depuis la chute de l'empire romain jusqu'à la révolution française*, Lacrosse, Bruxelles, 1838.

These linguistic, ethnic and behavioral traits have been converted more recently, that is, after the supremacy of economic and political neoliberalism and the end of the dichotomy of capitalism and communism, into the to some extent controversial issue of cultural rights or multiculturalism (see the last chapter). Thus, so-called cultural rights do not concern a political claim, which is universal, such as the right to vote, for example, but the right to be different by ethnic origin, gender or sexual preferences.

Cultural Action

1) Political and social assumptions: the State, Civil Society and Citizenship

Reconstituting the route, establishing a definition and circumscribing or relating the practical possibilities of cultural actions and animations are still tasks in progress. Both because of a relatively short time of study of the object itself, and because of its enormous empirical variability.

In this respect, the term socio-cultural action is also used, since this qualification - social - indicates: in the first place, the set of diverse structures and forms of human relations within a society (institutional relations of power, economic-productive, family, communicative, educational, etc). In Georg Simmel's view,¹⁴ for example, the social comprises the whole range of human interactions (die Wechselwirkung), from the "great organs and systems" (state, family, companies, professional associations), to those only accessible to "psychological microscopy", that is, the thousands of relationships between just one individual and another, experienced lastingly or momentarily. Secondly, social is understood as the objectives of transformation or improvement of living conditions (material and symbolic) of classes, strata, layers or poor, dispossessed or needy social groups, with a view to achieving a situation of greater balance in access to or distribution of wealth, knowledge, opportunities and life experiences. In this second sense, we can include Baudrillard's

¹⁴ *Sociologia*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1977.

judgment which, although ironic, preserves the understanding of the social as a redistribution of wealth: "The social exists to guarantee the useless consumption of the surplus, so that individuals can dedicate themselves to the useful management of their lives... The social exists to take care of absorbing the surplus wealth that, redistributed without any other form of process, would ruin the social order, creating an intolerable situation of utopia".¹⁵

Undeniable, however, is the fact that the concept of cultural action/animation appeared only in the 20th century, as a result of socio-political projects conceived, in turn, in the transition between the 18th and 19th centuries, by direct ascendancy of values, ideals and organizations that, in common, only opposed the "ancien régime", that is, absolutism, the aristocratic world and its traditional privileges, with which the rigid structure of traditional societies, based on land wealth, was preserved. Among those socio-political projects, which M. Gauchet¹⁶ brought together under the title of "the human rights revolution", we find those of liberals, social democrats, radical democrats, Christian democrats, socialists, communists and anarchists.¹⁷

For this very reason, besides the material and productive conditions that capitalism forged at the time, three sets of thoughts that, curiously, correspond to distinct cultures, have exerted a powerful influence on "human rights": the English political economy, French liberalism and German philosophy, the latter especially in its

¹⁵ *In the shadow of silent majorities or the end of the social* (À Sombra das maiorias silenciosas ou o fim do social), portuguese version, Ed. Brasiliense, São Paulo, 1985.

¹⁶ *La Révolution des droits de l'homme*, Paris, Galimard, 1989.

¹⁷ In this list we could even include two other formulas: Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian (the greatest happiness for the greatest number, all worth the same) and Helvetius' hedonistic politics (if happiness is the supreme value and if public happiness should prevail over individual happiness, then it is possible to sacrifice personal rights and freedoms in favor of the greatest happiness for the greatest number).

left and right Hegelian aspects. A clear indication of this political modernity can be found in the following statement, written in the 1820s: "What makes men morally unhappy is that they feel that the present does not correspond to the ends they consider just and good (particularly the constitutional ideals, in current days); they oppose such existence with the duty of what is the right of the thing. Here, it is not the particular interest or passion that demands satisfaction, but reason, right, freedom... *In no time have universal propositions and thoughts been so pretentiously manifested as in our own. If history once seemed to present itself as a struggle of passions, it shows itself in our times essentially under the disguise of superior legitimizations, although passions are not lacking...*".¹⁸

For some analysts, together with the democratic expansion of this long period, there has been a gradual rapprochement between State and Society, granting the first term (to the State) the possibility of intervening or assuming the other spheres of social life. Let us read, for example, Jacob Burckhardt: "This conception of the world (democracy), which springs from a thousand different sources, varies greatly according to the formation of its adherents, but at one point it is consistent: for it, the power of the State over the individual is never great enough, so that it erases the boundaries between State and Society and attributes to the State all that society itself probably will not do".¹⁹ Thus, in Carl Schmitt's opinion the evolution would have been from the absolute state of the 18th century to the non-interventionist state of the 19th and from this to the total state of the

¹⁸ W.F. Hegel, *Filosofia da História (Lectures on Philosophy of History)*, portuguese version, Ed. Universidade de Brasília, 1995 (my emphasis).

¹⁹ *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, 1870 (Quoted by Carl Schmitt in *The Concept of the Political*, portuguese version *O Conceito do Político*, 1992, Ed. Vozes).

20th: "Democracy should abolish all distinctions, all depoliticizations typical of the liberal 19th century and, by erasing the opposition state-society, it will also remove the oppositions and separations that correspond to the situation of the 20th century, notably the religious, cultural, economic, legal and scientific, as opposed to the political". Thinking still about the possible extremes of the new pair, there will be one direction that leads to state socialism, in which civil society submits to it, and another that leads to ultraliberalism or anarchism, in which society becomes the sole or supreme instance of relations. Reasoning in a radical way: either society believes that it has no consistency of its own, hence the need for state interventions, or it remains cohesive on its own, with the state being responsible only for the freedoms that it "naturally" expresses and desires. In a general way, therefore, the history of social rights and, in this universe, those of cultural actions and policies, tends to broaden the role of the State, even if only through legal bias.

In this same direction, Boaventura de Sousa Santos establishes temporal links between capitalism and the project of sociocultural modernity, both having been characterized, in a contradictory way, by objectives of regulation and emancipation. After a phase of *laissez faire*, the period of organised capitalism between the end of the 19th century and the 1970s would have followed. In this one, the sociologist says: "The state is itself an active agent of the transformations that have taken place in the community and in the market and, at the same time, it is constantly transforming itself to adapt to these transformations. Its increasingly compact articulation with the market is evident in the progressive regulation of the markets, in the connections of the state apparatus to the great monopolies, in the conduct of wars and other forms of political struggle for imperialist

control of the markets, in the growing intervention of the state in the regulation and institutionalisation of conflicts between capital and labour. On the other hand, the deepening of the articulation of the state with the community is clearly visible in social legislation, in the increase in the participation of the state in the management of the space and in the forms of collective consumption, in health and education, in transport and in housing, finally in the creation of the welfare state".²⁰

Even more clearly, the role of the state became fundamental with the 1929 crisis, from which oligopolistic capitalism surrendered to the need for interference and conduct of public power. Hence, "contrary to what had happened in the course of previous crises, when the 'natural laws' had been given free rein, we witnessed... an increasingly active intervention by the state, the growing control of the entire national economy, and varied measures which all result in the reduction of the sphere of action of private capitalism... It is the Harriman Committee of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that has been calling since October 1931 for the adoption of a 'national program of production and distribution', the 'coordination of economic problems' by a national council; in 1932, a member of the Reich Council, Dr. Hermann Bücher, who declared the end of the times of *laissez-faire and laissez-passar*, of unlimited individualism... The State has therefore broadened its field of activity in the course of these years. Not only through general measures, the tax system, customs rights, major works and social laws, but also through private interventions, assistance to businesses under threat... even

²⁰ Pela mão de Alice (*By Alice's Hand*), original text in Portuguese, Cortez Editora, 7ª, São Paulo, 1995.

nationalization, direction of production in certain sectors and, for the autarchic countries, in all areas of economic life".²¹

Consequently, alongside properly civil claims (personal freedoms and economic action) and political claims (rights to vote, representation and association), that is, those known as rights of formal citizenship, additional ones were formulated, including those of a symbolic or cultural nature, which gave rise to the subsequent model of a social or substantial citizenship.

Here it is no longer the concept of freedom that predominates, but that of equality or social balance, which means the redistribution of the wealth generated and the expansion of knowledge, benefits or practical amenities generated by a society that is progressively advanced - from the scientific-technological point of view -, highly productive and socially complex. Substantial citizenship is then based not on the idea of a *previous natural state* (typical of formal citizenship), but on a *social disposition to be constructed and conserved, conducted or stimulated by State action*. As Hannah Arendt rightly observes, nothing establishes equalities other than political citizenship (other than death, a natural and unappealable fact). In other words, one does not go from equality to the institution of citizenship, but from citizenship to freedom.

Social citizenship is also based on the recognition that society can maintain, deepen or create social inequalities (beyond personal, biological, innate and necessary differences) and, consequently, must stipulate mechanisms that allow individuals to reduce the distances of income and access to goods produced, material and immaterial,

²¹ *História geral das civilizações* (Histoire Générale des Civilisations), portuguese version, book VII, under coordination of Maurice Crouzet, Difusão Européia do Livro, São Paulo, 1961.

including the need to avoid acute class conflicts. Thus, the content of this citizenship adds to the formal freedoms other and new guarantees, paid or secured through the tax system (taxes, fees and contributions) or through parallel mechanisms, such as percentages of games and lotteries. Among others, and in dependence on historical circumstances:

- those of work protection (regulations, minimum remuneration, free time - in which weekly rest and holidays are included, which in turn allows the development of leisure);
- education (formal and informal, free at all levels);
- social security (unemployment benefit, retirement and pensions) and health (access to public or contracted services);
- housing (special credits);
- public security.

Modern policies or programs have been introduced to stimulate production and access to artistic and sporting activities, as well as environmental protection (preservation of ecosystems, wildlife, implementation of natural reserves and control of pollutants). In short, modern cultural action integrates the assumptions and political perspectives of a Welfare State (*Wohlfahrt*) or a social democracy.

But it is perfectly appropriate to ask ourselves whether other, older actions and institutions - for example, in the field of arts and thought - would no longer be appropriate and equally cultural actions. And the answer can only be one and affirmative. Some examples, distinct in content and time, prove this easily.

There is no denying that the institution of the Greek civic-theatrical competitions at the end of the 6th century BC. (under the tyranny of Psistrate) gave rise to the unsurpassable tradition of staging and dramatic literature, or that the construction of the museum-library of

Alexandria, built by the Ptolemy Soterus and Philadelphus (whose collections were expanded by descendants of the same Lágida dynasty), played an invaluable role for Western culture in guarding and disseminating the knowledge of antiquity. In this regard, it is worth remembering what Ernst Curtius wrote about it: "In appearance, a cultural association under the direction of a priest of the Muses and, in fact, an academy of sages, with a library of over 500,000 volumes. The fullness of the powers of the patron princes needed to join Greek science and philosophy to create an institution that was one of the pillars in the aqueduct of the Western tradition".²²

At the request of Guillaume Budé, King Francis I created, in 1530, the College of Readers of the Kingdom, reinstalled as the College of France under Henry IV. At the time of its foundation, the College ministered subjects that the University of Paris had not included in its grid: mathematics, Greek and Hebrew. Even today, the institution is not confused with a university or research center, since, although it offers dozens of courses and seminars, they are all free to attend and without official diplomas.

The same can be said of the Vatican's pioneering initiative in the organization and exhibition of its collections, a measure effected by Popes Clement XIV and Pius VI, who made public the visitation to the museums of the Holy See (1770 and 1775, respectively). It even predated the French Revolution, which adopted a policy of monuments in 1791 and promoted the transformation of the royal palace of the Louvre into a museological institution in 1793.

And if we take care to investigate the historical-social forms of cultural production, that is, the forms of patronage and support, we

²² *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, portuguese version, Edusp, S. Paulo, 1996.

will find cultural actions of various kinds, such as the *instituted* one²³ (that of the Greek poets or that of the Gaul bards, supported by the community of birth), of medieval *transition* (favoring and dependence on a nobiliary family) or of *commissioning and contracting*, this one being responsible, to a great extent, for the exceptional quality and quantity of artistic works of the Renaissance.

In the course of the 19th century, however, the social relations of cultural production have changed to the point where they have new characteristics compared to previous ones.

Until then, artistic and intellectual incentive or protection actions were restricted to the universes of the nobility, the aristocracy, the Catholic Church or the academic world. They were, therefore, symbols of class and conspicuous consumption, lending themselves to religious adornment and propaganda, or feeding the circles of high culture and the humanist tradition. On the other hand, they stimulated the production of works more than their diffusion or external appreciation, since it was intended and remained restricted to a small circle of appreciators (except for the practically public art of the churches).

In that century, however, cultural action gradually forged a hitherto unprecedented social dimension, influenced by various and simultaneous factors, among them the Enlightenment mentality, revolutionary perspectives (American and French), concessions from the bourgeoisie and upward liberalism, and also the romantic spirit of valuing popular or folkloric culture (Herder, the Sturm und Drang, the exaltation of the *Volksgeist*), even though Enlightenment and

²³ I use Raymond Williams's terminology and classification here.

romanticism presented contradictions that were sometimes irreparable between them.

In a simultaneous and complementary way, capitalist industrialization and urbanization created: 1) a radically mercantile society, in which almost everything prevails in exchange value; 2) a society with strong tendencies towards the globalization of productive, social and cultural relations; and 3) a mass society, that is, formed by the new proletariat, concentrated in the main productive centers of Europe and the United States, and in which wage-earning workers - factory workers, civil servants and commercial workers - self-employed craftsmen and small peasants were included.

Here, it is convenient to mention that the English population jumped from 18 to 24 million between 1781 and 1831, with 40% of the latter already occupied in the secondary sector of the economy. And that, in 1840, the industrialized region of North America had 10 million inhabitants, when the whole country had only 4 million in 1790. In general terms, the European population more than doubled in the course of the century. In the six main states alone, it increased from 153 to 321 million, reaching 460 million in total.

This extraordinary population growth has also generated one of the most important migratory movements for the Western world. Between the last two decades of the 19th century and the first of the next, there was, for example, an annual emigration of about 450,000 Britons and 400,000 Italians towards the "New World". Or that of 700,000 Russians to Western Europe and the Americas.

With the exception of the United States and Japan, which were developing with similar impetus and characteristics, Europe (mainly Great Britain, France and Germany) dominated the purchasing market of raw materials and food from the rest of the world, while at

the same time supplying 62% of exports, sovereignly fixing the prices of freight, insurance and banking operations and maintaining foreign investments that ensured a comfortable trade balance.

Along with material dominance, the old continent continued to exercise an undeniable intellectual and political-cultural superiority. Students and technicians came to its universities; their textbooks, theses, theories and publications were translated; artistic novelties were copied and some nations tried to adopt or adapt, even if timidly, to European political and representative institutions, with their capitalist and liberal, positivist or socializing tendencies.

Consequently, the new social relations of intellectual and artistic production had to adapt to the format and conditions of the capitalist model. They started to constitute a system of buying and selling abstract goods and artistic objects, in which the author, now free to the market, had, in return, the property rights of the work or creative process. In such a situation, cultural production increased its dependence on political games and economic forces, including here an open and anonymous market, populated by indistinct, average and volatile consumers (in the sense of permanent adepts of novelties, as the new industrial technologies made predictable).

Within this rapidly expanding and mobile group, the role played by medium intellectual groups - writers, teachers, artists, journalists, political and trade union activists, etc. - had a favourable impact on European proletarian environments, which changed the features and perspectives of ancient cultural action, giving it a markedly sociopolitical tendency under republican or monarchic governments, but constitutionally representative or of greater democratic scope.

Among the most immediate objectives were: a) to alphabetize the people in order to minimize their ignorance, to give them greater

social flexibility and to instrumentalize them both professionally and politically; b) to disseminate popular manifestations, especially artistic ones, with the intention of counteracting a "cultural power" to aristocratic expressions already in decline; c) to disseminate in less educated social environments, and in a facilitated or vulgarized way, some elements or expressions of high culture.

In short, cultural action took on the burden of popular education, also related to the Enlightenment ideal according to which the people should be stimulated to break with intellectual torpor and appropriate the tools of critical thinking. If intellectual inertia had been a characteristic of peasant communities, very different perspectives were open to the new urban-industrial classes. Popular education would be an adequate response to that situation that Ortega y Gasset called "political domination of the masses," characterized by the growing social influence of that great agglomeration and which, by its direct manifestations or through its representatives, then demanded "the raising of its historical level". On the one hand, this meant, for example, following the recommendations of the *Report on Education*, delivered to the French Legislative Assembly in April 1792, and in which the Marquis de Condorcet, at the same time, warned and recommended: "... education must be universal, that is to say, extend to all citizens. It must be distributed with all the equality that permits the necessary limits of spending, of the distribution of men over the territory and of the time that children can devote to it. It must embrace, in its various degrees, the complete system of human knowledge and guarantee to men, at all ages of life, the ease of retaining their knowledge or acquiring new ones... To offer to all individuals of the human species the means to provide for their needs, to ensure their well-being, to know their rights, to understand and fulfill the possibility

of perfecting their abilities, to become capable of exercising social functions to which they have the right to be called, to develop the talents received from nature and, by such means, to establish in fact equality, to make real the political equality recognized by law".

He suggested a continuing education "throughout life, as this will prevent the knowledge acquired in schools from being erased from memory". With this proposal and understanding, a first official manifestation of *permanent education* also emerged, an objective closely linked to the modern idea of cultural action.

On the other hand, however, that same elevation - turning to the words of the Spanish philosopher²⁴ - ran the risk of serving more "the transformation of luxuries into needs and the popularization of comforts" than an integral, serious and humanistic formation, because "when one studies the psychological structure of this new type of man-mass, one finds the following: in the first place, the radical impression that life is easy, without tragic limitations; therefore, every average individual finds in himself a sense of dominion and triumph which, in the second place, invites him to affirm himself as he is, and to give his moral and intellectual existence well and completely".

Some socio-political events, which occurred mainly after the bloody revolutionary days of 1848 in France and which involved and made possible the subsequent movements of popular education and cultural action, can be recalled below: the formation of societies, leagues, clubs or political parties [the League of the Just (*Bund der Gerechten*), however, predecessor of the League of Communists, dates from 1838]; the creation of numerous workers' unions, according to category or region; the struggle for the institution of

²⁴ *La rebelión de las masas*, Ed. Tecnos, 2003.

democratic laws and constitutional reforms; the religious movement of the 19th century.

Among the examples of such claims and tendencies we can recall the creation in 1863 of two socialist parties in Germany, that of Lassalle and that of Bebel and Liebknecht; the right to strike and to unionization granted by Napoleon III in 1864; the extension of the vote to the popular classes in Great Britain, granted by the Torie cabinet of Disraeli in 1867; the free trade unionism established in 1890 in Bismarck's Germany; the expansion of confessional entities (missionary and pastoral, Catholic and Protestant), devoted to educational and charitable works, as well as the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, proclaimed in the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII and *Quadragesimo Anno* of Pius XI. Together they reaffirm the need to recognize the social role of public and private property, while condemning unbridled economic liberalism and socialism.

Since 1905, not a few national and even revolutionary strikes have erupted in Europe. Every year, the demonstrations of the First of May attest to the strength of trade unionism and workers' parties. By this time, Great Britain already has four million union members, Germany more than three and a half million, and France a million. "Parliaments count 28% of workers' representatives in Germany, 25% in Norway, 20% in Belgium, 17% in France and 10% in Italy... Labour holds only 6% of the seats in the Commons, but obtained 42% of the votes in 1910".²⁵

Finally, it is possible to observe in the cultural action movements that emerged in the 19th century and developed in the 20th, a form of communicative counterpower, considering, in this case, the opinions

²⁵ *Histoire Générale des Civilisations*, portuguese version, under coordination of Maurice Crouzet, opus cit.

of Niklas Luhmann.²⁶ In other words, all social systems are equally constituted through communication, which in turn selects messages among social actors and thus gives them certain possible meanings. In the words of the author, "by means of communication one understands the elements and processes complementary to language, that is, a code of generalized symbols that directs the transmission of selective results". Thus, the media have, besides the immediate capacity to make themselves understood among people, another one that is to motivate social actors, because they suggest world views, actions and results. As a means of communication, the power is capable of limiting the space for selection of other actors (classes, groups, people, institutions). Consequently, in advanced societies, from the technical-cultural points of view and socioeconomic differentiation, the communicative codes may become different and concurrent, conditioning relationships of power and truth, acceptance or rejection of values, consensus or conflict of objectives.

As can be seen throughout this work, cultural action has historically been developed as a form of symbolic and socio-political activity, based on projects and within civil society organizations (and remains so today in various places and different situations).²⁷ Therefore, what later came to be called *cultural policy* corresponds to an institutionalized cultural action assumed by the *public sphere*, which can vary according to ideological representations and understandings of the role of the State. But as, from the end of the

²⁶ *Macht (Power)*, portuguese version, Ed. UNB, 1985.

²⁷ It should be clarified that the term "civil society" (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) is used here within the Hegelian-Mexist tradition, referring to a non-political or non-state condition in which economic relations predominate. Therefore, it is not a direct translation of the Latin expression *societas civiles*, still used by jusnaturalism precisely as a political society, and therefore as an overcoming of the state of nature (*status naturae*).

twentieth century, the distance or autonomy of civil society vis-à-vis the State has regained strength, either as a constituent part of a neoliberal society that reduces the roles of the State, or as an expression of new socio-cultural movements (see cultural rights item), a return to the predominance of restricted or private cultural action is likely over cultural policy, that is, public cultural action.

Among the diverse trajectories of cultural action - understood from the point of view of the social extension of citizenship, the popularization of knowledge and life experiences, including aesthetics, and which certain circles also call *cultural democratization*²⁸ - some are pioneering and have therefore acquired historical importance. That's what we'll see next.

²⁸ This idea will be discussed later, as it contains an ambiguity of meaning that is usually unnoticed, even among its theorists and professionals.

II) Cultural action within the scope of civil society

Scandinavia and Germanic countries

The adult education movement, which historically also presented itself as a popular, informal education and cultural diffusion and improvement effort, gained its first organizations and working methods in Denmark, through the *Folkehøjskoler* (popular higher schools).²⁹

Lutheran pastor, educator, poet and historian Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig was the great creator and encourager of this experience. Grundtvig had travelled to England to research early Nordic literature and there he was favourably impressed by the permanent conviviality and common way of life of Oxford and Cambridge teachers and boarders. Back in Denmark, he began writing pamphlets in 1836 in favour of schools that were both superior and popular, in which a similar pedagogy was adopted, that is, that of a teaching community. Among Grundtvig's romantic ideals, teaching should serve the development not only of a "general culture", having as its axis the learning of national history, art and literature, but also that of a "formation for life", at the same time political and religious. Community and interdisciplinary education would be the best vehicle for personal maturity, the capacity for self-reflection and democratic coexistence - in short, "to be unique, but not self-sufficient," in the words of the poet and theologian.

²⁹ *Folkehoyskole* (Norwegian), *Folkhögskola* (Swedish), *Fólkáskúli* (Faroe Islands) and *Kansankorkeakoulu* (Finnish)

The first successful experiment of the educational proposal took place in 1844, with the opening of the Rødding school in Schleswig, still Danish at the time, for eighteen young people from the rural area of the duchy at the initiative of Christian Flor. In 1851 another Danish educator, Christen Kold, followed Grundtvig's wishes and founded the Ryslinge folk school in Fionia. It is curious to note that, in Kold's model, students should, before receiving information, *be animated*, that is, awakened to cognitive and practical interests. On one occasion he was asked what he would like to get out of his school activities and, taking off his pocket watch, he answered: "I want to wind up my students, so that they never stop".

Since then, several establishments have been opened throughout Scandinavia, with the following pioneers: in Norway, Sagatun (1864); in Sweden, and at the same time Herrestad, Önnestad and Hvilan in 1868; and Kangasala in Finland in 1889.

Currently, the Danish popular schools, which are spread all over the country, including the Faroe Islands, fall into the following generic categories (as each establishment is free to choose its subjects and manage itself administratively): The *common* ones, which offer, for all adult age groups, two or three courses considered to be the main ones, besides many others complementary, such as theatre, music, plastic arts, cinema, religion, philosophy, sociology, psychology or physical education; the ones destined only to *young people* between 16 and 19 years old who did not finish high school and are updated there; the *specialized* ones, in which a determined content is deepened (architecture, industrial design, language, cinema, physical education, economy, etc); and the *international* ones, directed to the global learning of cultural, economic and political relations, in which foreigners can also enrol. Usually, *Folkehøjskoler* maintains a

boarding school regime, varying the duration of the courses from two to ten months, with no prior requirements. There are no exams, and what is important, besides technical learning, are personal experiences and group experiences. The state provides grants to the system, allowing schools to charge students relatively low weekly maintenance fees.

In addition to the Danish example (since the Schleswig dukedom took over Prussia in 1864), Germany took advantage of the habit of holding public lectures by union or municipal bodies to establish its network of popular universities.

In 1890, in Frankfurt, a committee was formed to promote "Public lectures" (*Ausschuss für Volksvorlesungen*) and thereby improve the intellectual training of adults under the idealistic motto of "knowledge is power". Years later, in 1906, the committee hired an official administrator, Wilhelm Epstein, and his name was changed to "Frankfurt Union for Adult Education". After the Nazi period, Epstein's wife, Else, resumed the institution's pedagogical work with the help of the German Trade Unions (DGB) and later the city hall.

In Munich, the foundation of the Association of the Popular Higher School (Volks-Hochschul-Verein) dates from 1896 and, from 1906, the "Academic Courses for Workers". Both initiatives converged on the installation of the city's Popular University in 1923. Already under the specific name of Popular University (*Volkshochschule*), the first two establishments to be set up in Germany were those of Berlin (1902), under the inspiration of Wilhelm Schwaner, and that of Jena (1918). This one received the surprising support of two thousand students in its first year of operation.

The great momentum of the movement was given by the Weimar Republic. Quite advanced regarding the legal recognition of

structures and rights related to education, labor protection and social functions of the company, the constitution also legalized and allowed the incentive of popular universities (article 148). Still in 1919, the number of these organizations reached twenty-six, rising to ninety in the following year. Between 1900 and 1933, popular universities were the main propagators of informal education. Most likely for these reasons, the Nazi regime had them closed. After the war, the Association of German Hochschulen (Deutschen Hochschul-Verband (DVV), also a sponsor of the German Adult Training Institute (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung), was founded, in charge of mediating and evaluating the combination of theoretical and practical aspects. At the beginning of the 21st century, there were more than two thousand of these schools.

The offer of courses, which duration varies from one week to three months, is quite diverse and covers areas such as general training, professional training, political training, training for health, languages, arts, sports and physical activities, school completion (preparation for certificates) and computing, as well as seminars and special holiday events. Each school is autonomous in its programming and receives grants from the region (*Land*), the municipality (*Stadt*) and professional associations, in addition to having, to a lesser extent, operating revenues from the services provided. There are also boarding schools, in the Scandinavian way, established in the *Heimvolkshochschulen*, although the courses continue to be only of short duration (2 to 3 months), and also special programs for the disabled, women and the elderly.

In Austria, the first popular university was established in the city of Krems in 1885; two years later, the one in Vienna appeared. The expansion of the network, however, only took place after the second

war, having reached the number of 272 units across the country, in 2005. About two thirds of schools are constituted as civil society organizations, including- workers' associations, the rest being public institutions.

Currently, its programs are based mainly on courses with varying durations, complemented by seminars, symposia, excursions or monitored visits, distributed in the following areas: a) second way of education (preparations for concluding different school grades); b) languages (dedicated to around 70 languages); c) political training (social, political, historical and social psychology aspects); d) technical and professional education (learning and improvement); e) health education (food, alternative medicine, support groups) and sports (gymnastics, swimming and games); d) culture, arts and leisure.

From a budgetary point of view, 60% of the endowment is made up of its own operating revenues, with the remaining 40% being subsidies from regions, municipalities and the federal government.

France

In 1866, still under the influence of Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals of equality and emancipation, the League of Education (*Ligue de l'Enseignement*) was created in Paris, on the initiative of Jean Macé, a teacher, journalist and left-wing political activist. A supporter of Charles Fourier and propagandist of universal suffrage, Macé had already created, before the foundation of the League, the *Society of Popular Libraries of the Upper Rhine* (during the period he was there as a refugee, after the Bonaparte coup) and, together with the writer Jules Verne, the *Journal of Education and*

Recreation, destined for children's education. The League obtained the support of workers and intellectuals all over the country, after a call published in the newspaper *L'opinion nationale*, in favor of "bringing together all those who wish to contribute to the development of public education in the country". Contrary to the predominance of denominational schools, Macé wanted the country to adhere to republican education and, with it, open itself to "the path of civilization". Through voluntary circles, the entity dedicated itself to the work of adult literacy, the promotion of handicraft courses for young women, political training and the establishment of local libraries. At the same time, it launched a broad educational bill, through public conferences, an effort that helped structure free, secular and compulsory education in the country, held between 1881 and 1882.

Since 1928, the League has adopted leisure activities as part of its program, dividing them into three specialized organizations: one for sports, another for fine arts education, and a third for cinema. Soon after the May 1968 movement, in which the educational forms in force were vigorously contested, the institution adhered to the idea of animation as a vehicle for socio-cultural transformation. In 1980, the League created its National Training and Research Institute for Permanent Education (Infrep).

In 1896, during the course of the famous "Dreyfus case", the typographer Georges Deherme, with the Montreuil-sous-Bois workers' support, proposed a first French popular university, which he called the *Cooperation of Ideas*, aiming at not only to provide basic education to adult workers, but to bring the intellectuals closer to the poorest classes of the population, allowing them to live together, debate and clarify as diverse subjects as possible. The initiative soon spread throughout the country, with the participation of union and

student entities, city halls and professionals, such as that of the physician Charles Debierre, leader of the radical party in Lille, who founded a similar organization there, three years later. According to Françoise Tétard, a researcher at CNRS, what was a popular university at the end of the 19th century? "Initially, a place open to the inhabitants of a neighborhood, a house with rooms for adult courses, popular conferences, a library, public reading, group support or sponsorship, hygiene lessons, home economics course, etc. We dream of the possibility of teachers and workers being together every day, we want it to become an intellectual and moral association of equal volunteers ... A teaching inspector had published his practical guide for popular educators, making of the primary teacher the link between the school of the day (infantile) and the school of the night (adult). Thus, the primary teacher, after working at school, would organize evening courses, debates, circulating libraries, recreational outings, learning centers and, a little later, the mobile cinema. A kind of apostolate!".³⁰

Between 1899 and 1908, 230 entities (known by the acronym UP) were installed, spread throughout the Paris region and the provinces. According to Edouard Dolléans, it was "a critical period, marked by a crisis of conscience of the intellectuals, but which allowed them a common experience and impetus, creating a breach in the wall of intellectualism, until then closed to realities, and through which they could enter fresh air and some light".³¹ Despite the enthusiasm and constitution in 1900 of a society that brought together all the

³⁰ *De l'affaire Dreyfus à la guerre d'Algérie, un siècle d'éducation populaire*, Revue l'Esprit, mars-avril 2002.

³¹ *Pour une culture vivante et libre*, Étude sur l'éducation ouvrière, n° 21, 1936.

universities, the many internal ideological dissensions, the pedagogical difficulties in certain subjects (especially sciences, mathematics and philosophy) and the accumulation of subjects that were too specific or academic progressively discouraged the frequenters. In L. Mercier's interpretation, "What did the worker ask? The practical and precise knowledge of the society in which he suffered. What did the university offer him? The knowledge of metaphysics, of literature, of the arts of the past; in short, distractions, a culture of idleness. As usual, the people expected bread and, as usual, they offered him brioche".³² When 1914 arrived, and as a result of those pedagogical difficulties or unforeseen teaching inadequacies, disinterest in the working class environment had reduced the number of universities to only 20. The wars and their periods of reconstruction made it even more difficult for the UPs to survive, despite the stimulus or illusion of the *Popular Front*.³³

But from the 1960s onwards, the proposal was revitalised (the University of Mulhouse appeared) and, progressively, the number of educational centres (Berry, Romans, Caen, Avignon, among many others) was increased, whose courses, because they are free, do not stipulate prior conditions of knowledge, although they do not dispense with the quality of information. The increases in free time and in the retired population and, more recently, in young adults struggling for

³² *Les universités populaires, 1899-1914*, Les éditions ouvrières, 1986.

³³ A left-wing government formed by the socialist (SFIO, 147 MPs), communist (72 MPs) and radical (116 representatives) parties, which lasted from 1936 to 1938. Before the new government took office, there was an extraordinary succession of strikes, without the prior knowledge and control of union or party leaders. In about fifteen days, two million half of the workers paralyzed work in 12,000 factories, of which 9,000 were occupied, demanding new labor rights, like a 40-hour week, legal strike, collective bargaining and paid vacation, accepted by the Matignon agreements. During these demonstrations, according to Simone Weil's statement, the "joy strikes" were established, characterized by the preparation of leisure activities and cultural actions. For two months, dances, radio shows, fashion shows, popular music recitals and quick gymnastics courses were organized.

jobs and professional development seem to have led to a parallel growth in attendance and even in the number of volunteer instructors and lecturers. According to the *Association of the Popular Universities of France* (AUPF), they would total 70 in 2002, and there would be about 110,000 enrolled on the same date. The majority of those interested would be people whose desire for new knowledge would be dissociated from the need for a diploma, based on the programming of free courses and meetings (seminars, colloquia). For them, "the lack of content and density of public and citizen debate, increasingly subject to political marketing and the realm of communication counselors, as much as the distance of political discourse from lived realities and a certain resignation of the political world in the face of the economic cause the feelings of inadequacy and inconsistency of contemporary democratic life; hence the need for knowledge and an authentic culture".³⁴

Still in France, in the 1880s, equally civil initiatives for recreational leisure and physical activity programs for young people appeared - the summer camps. There are so many of these associations that Catholic groups meet in their own National Union, in 1909, and the laity create another, in 1912, called the National Federation. "In addition to the secular-confessional cleavage, the colonies are very successful and attract close to 100,000 children on the eve of 1914. Their progression is even more important between the two wars, when city halls, often socialist and communist, also create their own public colonies themselves. The number of adherents reaches 300 thousand in 1931 and exceeds 400 thousand in 1936. If the State, through the ministries of labor and health, subsidize a good number

³⁴ Avignon UP virtual and presentation page.

and exercise a certain control over them, the initiative remains private among most of them”.³⁵

São Paulo, Brazil

Between the last quarter of the 19th century and the first two decades after the proclamation of the republic, a period in which coffee agriculture politically projected the Minas-São Paulo axis and the immigration currents increased, at the same time replacing slave labor in the fields and creating an urban working class, the capital of São Paulo gained cosmopolitan airs, both from the urban and architectural point of view, as well as from public services and social customs.³⁶ The coffee activity had converted São Paulo into the main commercial and exporter pole of the country, produced accumulation of capital and modified not only the social relations of production, by generating capital for the formation of an industrial park, but establishing conditions so that several other social spheres and cultural to modernize. And it also saw its first circles of patronage and artistic and cultural institutions, public and private, created at the initiative of the proprietary oligarchies - landowners, businessmen in industry and commerce, bankers -, allied with prestigious professionals and politicians. “Because many of them have strong interests in various sectors of the economy and an active participation in political affairs, it is not surprising that these same figures of the elite were responsible for the reform of the *Lyceum of Arts and Crafts*, for the creation of the State Pinacoteca, by the regulation of

³⁵ *L'animation professionnelle*. Augustin, J.P. e Gillet, J.C., L'Harmattan, Paris, Montréal, 2000.

³⁶ On a visit to São Paulo, Georges Clemenceau, then French Prime Minister, felt perfectly at home, as he declared to *Illustration* magazine (Aracy Amaral, *Artes plásticas na semana de 22*, Ed. Perspectiva, 1976).

Pensionato Artístico (*Artistic Patronage*), by the financing of the decoration project of the Paulista Museum formulated by Taunay, by the sponsorship of large international exhibitions, by the acquisition and assembly of collections of works of art, by the support and encouragement granted to artists and writers, including those directly engaged in the organization and outbreak of the modernist movement”.³⁷ Interesting data that confirms the trend of the time comes from individual exhibitions of plastic arts. Between 1901 and 1910, 62 were performed, 35 of which were national artists and 27 from foreigners; in the following decade, there were 199 in total, with 120 from national authors and 79 from foreign authors.

In 1873, Leôncio de Carvalho, jurist and liberal educator (who at the end of the decade will propose general reforms in primary education and defend the professionalization of women in higher education), founded, together with the contribution of 130 associates, the Propagating Society of the Popular Instruction, thereby offering schooling opportunities to the children of urban workers. The intention of those responsible was linked to the positivist ideals of material progress and popular education and this can be seen in the following statement by Martim Francisco de Andrada e Silva, made on the opening day of classes, in response to conservative criticisms: “England, Belgium, the United States, Switzerland, where public instruction is seriously taken care of, without manual work defining it, respond victoriously to the anguished voices of the tearful Jeremiahs”. Years later, in 1882, the Society was transformed into the Lyceum of Arts and Crafts, with the most appropriate intention of “giving the people free knowledge necessary to the arts and crafts, to commerce,

³⁷ *Nacional estrangeiro (National foreign)*, Sérgio Miceli, Cia. Das Letras, 2003.

to farming, to industries". The Lyceum then became a milestone in Brazilian vocational education, artistic and artisanal, given the practical need to specialize or improve the workforce, required both by workshops or by industry, as well as by civil construction in great expansion at the time. Thus, its curriculum included the various types of drawing, sculpture, painting, prints, photography, ceramics, joinery and ebanisteria, metalwork, music, mathematics and geometry, mechanics and surveying. From 1905, the school began to sell its production and to receive orders from individuals and public and private companies. And in 1923, mechanics learning was introduced, whose example would be followed, two decades later, by the Social Service of Industry (Sesi).

It was precisely in the Lyceum group of patrons, among them Ramos de Azevedo, its director between 1905 and 1921, Freitas Valle, Sampaio Vianna, Nestor Pestana and Adolfo Pinto, that the idea of creating the State Pinacoteca, implanted in 1905, came about. First public and specialized space for the exhibition of plastic arts in the city, Pinacoteca evidently offered more suitable conditions for exhibitions than the establishments used until then: hotels, theaters, cinemas, shops, confectioneries, bookstores or private associations. The chosen place was the Lyceum building, where the first major Brazilian Fine Arts Exhibition (the second date of 1913) came to be organized in 1911, divided into three areas: architecture and decorative arts, painting and sculpture. One hundred and seven artists participated, with about 400 works, and the exhibition was an opportunity for exhibitors to sell their paintings and pieces, since art

“as a commodity, needs a market, demands a rendezvous in which supply and demand are found to achieve their ends”.³⁸

On the other side of the social scale, when we compared it with the Lyceum, there was the cultural and glamorously mundane life of Villa Kyrial, a farm owned by the lawyer, professor, poet, collector and politician José de Freitas Valle.³⁹ Center for literary soirees, musical auditions, conference cycles, aristocratic lunches and dinners, the residence served as both a political meeting point, a cultural reference, a stimulus for new artists and intellectuals and a reason for criticizing preferences Europeanizing or overly French from its owner (as a symbolist poet, under the pseudonym of Jacques d'Avray, he wrote only in French). The main figures of aesthetics still in vogue circulated there (academicism, parnassianism, symbolism), and those who would come to propose the revolution of the first modernism. The following three opinions, recovered by Márcia Camargos,⁴⁰ deserve attention, in order to capture the eclectic character of the “greatest godfather of the arts in Brazil”, according to Villa Lobos and Paulo Mendes de Almeida.

Oswald de Andrade's opinion: “Men of the future, men of the past, intellectuals and pseudo-intellectuals, foreigners, natives, artists, scholarship holders from Europe, all fauna without a compass around the host drop of the senator-poet. From the futile automaton of 19th century diplomacy, Sousa Dantas, to a promissory note of genius, the pianist Sousa Lima”. Mário de Andrade's: “It is the only organized salon, the only oasis from which we collect ourselves weekly, getting

³⁸ Inauguration speech given by Adolfo Pinto (Correio Paulistano newspaper of December 25).

³⁹ Valle also played an important role in the field of education, having chaired the Commission for Public Instruction for years and participated in the creation of the system of early childhood schools and education reforms in agricultural schools.

⁴⁰ *Villa Kyrial, chronicle of the belle époque paulistana*, Ed. Senac, 2001.

rid of the hoaxes of shallow life. It may very well be that people with whom artistic ideals disagree with ours come with him - and even at Villa Kyrial there are all races of art; extreme ultraists, with two feet in the future, and mummies - but it's a salon, it's an oasis". And that of João do Rio: "The artists are grateful to the Villa ... Young people there go, full of shyness and dreams, certain of their fading attention that no one has yet given them; the greatest geniuses who pass through Brazil; and there are Brazilian artists at home, increasingly exiled in a country where political parasitism fades the cult of beauty".

Another private institution born in the circles of the economic and intellectual elite of São Paulo was the Society of Artistic Culture, constituted in 1912 by personalities such as Afonso Arinos, Graça Aranha, Olavo Bilac, Martins Fontes, Coelho Neto, Alfredo Pujol, Armando Prado and Oliveira Lima. The initial objectives, and which still remain today, were to organize cycles of conferences on the world of arts, promote concerts of classical music and host theatrical performances. Currently, the Society also dedicates itself to the areas of dance and musical courses.

São Paulo - The Sesc and the new museums of its modernity

From the time of the *Estado Novo*, the Brazilian economic expansion, caused in large part by the second war, also gave rise to the growth of the working class in the country. Two statistical data help us to understand the dimension of the phenomenon: between 1940 and 1959, the number of industrial companies increased from 41,000 to 109,000; and the number of workers passed from 670,000 to 1.5 million. The "authoritarian republic" of Getúlio had a national development project commanded by the State, since it would assume

multiple responsibilities. Among them, measures to control and replace imports, dominance over the capital market, the establishment of an industrial infrastructure and financing agency (BNDES), the recruitment and formation of a technical and bureaucratic elite, the structuring of a single educational system, the consolidation of labor laws, the implementation of labor justice, and the organization of union structures and movements (of bosses and employees), through protections and alliances. In the ideological terrain, the Manichean struggle of the Cold War was adopted, with reflexes on practically all the national institutions.

For reasons like these, the main entrepreneurs of industry, commerce, services and agriculture met in the city of Teresópolis, state of Rio de Janeiro, in May 1945, in search of initiatives that would improve the quality of the workforce and reduce the socioeconomic and political conflicts that could arise. This meeting, called the Conference of the Producing Classes, launched the Social Peace Charter, with the objectives of reconciling economic growth and social justice, guaranteeing the democratic regime and reducing possible tensions between capital and labor.⁴¹

A first undertaking, prior to the conference itself, had already been carried out, when, in 1942, *Senai, National Service for Industrial Learning*, was created. Based on the recommendations of the Charter, new entities of a social nature and of education for work were founded, among them the *Social Service of Commerce, Sesc*, this one through Decree-Law 9.853, of September 13, 1946. In its article

⁴¹ "Employers and employees who dedicate themselves in Brazil to the various branches of economic activity recognize that a solid social peace, founded on the economic order, must be the result of an educational work through which one succeeds in fraternizing people, strengthening in them the sentiments of solidarity and trust... For this purpose, ... assume the commitment to strive for the attainment of these objectives, through the reciprocal recognition of rights and duties, within a true system of social justice" (eleven recommendations, addressed to employers and employees, follow).

first, the law attributed to the National Trade Confederation the task of creating the body “for the purpose of planning and executing, directly or indirectly, measures that contribute to the well-being and the improvement of the standard of living of commercial employees and their families, and, well, for the moral and civic improvement of the community. In carrying out these purposes, the Social Service for Commerce will aim, in particular, to assist with domestic problems (nutrition, housing, clothing, health, education and transportation); measures to defend the real wages of employees; incentive to the production activity; educational and cultural achievements, aiming at valuing man”.⁴²

In a concrete way, Sesc's programs cover the following areas, allowing haunTERS (individuals and families) to have access or experiences in each of them: culture - consisting of *artistic activities* of a plastic, theatrical, musical, choreographic, literary nature, from video and cinema, both through shows, exhibitions or festivals, and through courses and workshops. This scope also includes debates, seminars or congresses on current or historically important topics; *physical development, sports and recreation* - encompassing the practice of sports and the most diverse initiation courses, as well as free and recreational games; *health - dental and food services* (in restaurants and cafeterias) and educational activities, such as prevention and clarification campaigns; *childhood development* - program aimed at children from seven to thirteen years old and carried out by activities that are both playful, informative and of psychomotor and cognitive improvement; *social work with the elderly* - nucleation, dynamization and provision of common or specific

⁴² The others were also formed in 1946: the Social Service of Industry (SESI) and the National Service of Commercial Learning (SENAC).

activities for people of this age group; *leisure and social tourism* - opportunities to rest and enjoy holidays and weekends in appropriate centers, as well as trips to cities in Brazil.

With regard to the museums of Art of São Paulo (MASP, 1947), Modern Art (MAM, 1948) and Contemporary of the University of São Paulo (MAC-USP, 1963), they were all fruits not only of private patronage but of modernizing objectives or updating the country's society and cultural life. With regard to MASP, the initiative fell to Assis Chateaubriand, at the time the most influential businessman in the national press; as for MAM, the proposal came from Sérgio Milliet and was adopted by the largest industrialist in Latin America, Francisco (Ciccillo) Matarazzo Sobrinho, who planned the structure and arranged for the acquisition of works directly in Europe; MAC, on the other hand, emerged from an administrative and financial crisis faced by MAM in the early 1960s, and its collection was transferred to the new institution, assumed by the University of São Paulo.

In the course of the 1930s and 1940s, the processes of industrial growth and urban density in the capital of São Paulo also favored the expansion of certain occupations and activities linked, more or less closely, to the production and consumption of symbolic works, such as teachers, journalists, advertisers, public and private administrators, independent professionals and artistic expressions themselves. At the same time, the emigration of European intellectuals, then caused by political-ideological factors and the outbreak of the second war, contributed a lot to forge those new cultural elites.

Finally, as Maria Arminda Arruda points out, "In São Paulo, especially, the artistic movement was quite organized, as can be seen from the associations that emerged during the 1930s, such as the

Sociedade Pró-Arte Moderna (SPAM), from *Clube dos Artistas Modernos* (CAM), born at the end of 1932; the emergence of the São Paulo Artistic Family, in 1937, which brought together the Santa Helena Group, culminating in the French Painting Exhibition in 1940 and the National Industry Exhibition in 1941 ... the increase in the number of galleries and exhibitions it is symptomatic of the professionalization of artistic activity, a project of the Union of Plastic Artists, established in 1938. The foundation of museums was the result, therefore, of a combination of emerging factors, in all fields, which were part of the metropolitan atmosphere of São Paulo".⁴³

⁴³ *Metrópole e Cultura* (Metropolis and Culture, São Paulo in the second half of the XX century), Edusc, 2001.

III) Conceptual Interpretations

General and the most ancient ideas

Although we have no intention here of carrying out a hermeneutic analysis in the manner of Heidegger, that is, closely linked to etymology, it is nevertheless worth recalling the original meanings of the terms action and animation.

In Aristotle, action constitutes the process and the result of a deliberate human choice or purpose. This means that what is necessary, which cannot be otherwise (as it would indicate absolute dependence), does not constitute an action. It is reserved for a possible action. As there is no power in impossible actions, it is seen that an action occurs when the power (which may become) becomes something else that was not or was not before.

From his master, Tomas Aquinas also distinguishes the immanent action - the one that remains in the actor of the operation, according to his own will or nature (want, feel, understand) - from the transient action, whose result passes from the agent to an object or patient, who generates or produces something external (things and social relations).

For Hannah Arendt, who recovered the Greek tradition in this regard, one can distinguish “contemplative life” from “active life”. The latter is constituted by labor (the arduous, incessant, daily and inevitable redoing that the biological cycle imposes on us), work (the material construction of the world, which is inhabited by instruments and objects) and by action, that is, by relationships direct and eminently human that the power of the word has to politically organize

society and institute its ethical, legal, aesthetic and cultural values. "The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected of him, who is in a position to fulfill what is infinitely improbable."⁴⁴ For this reason, action manifests itself as the most noble of human activities, especially politics, which "is love applied to life".⁴⁵ Talcott Parsons, from a sociological point of view, defines it from three basic elements and their relations: an agent that provokes it, a purpose for which it is directed and a final situation different from the initial one. The *effort of a will* takes place under certain sociocultural, economic and political *situations*, whose constraints can be modified. In addition to effort and will, and situations, there are *conditions*, almost always unalterable, normative *personal values* and the *ends sought*.⁴⁶

As for the word animation, it is derived from the Greek psyche by the Latin anima, soul, being at the same time the principle of life, the cause of sensibility and thought, as much as a substance to itself, which allows the stability of the beings, knowledge and values in which it manifests itself. In Phaedo, for example, Socrates dialogues with Cebes and Symmias in the following terms: "– ... the soul has with the invisible species more resemblance than the body; but the body has with the visible species more resemblance than the soul? - Necessarily, Socrates. - Did we not say just now that the soul sometimes uses the body to observe something through sight, ear or other sense? Thus the body is an instrument when it is through some sense that the examination of the thing is made. Then the soul hesitates, is dragged by the body in the direction of that which never

⁴⁴ *The Human Condition*, portuguese version, Ed. Forense Universitária, 1985.

⁴⁵ *Die Politik ist angewandte Liebe zum Leben*.

⁴⁶ *The Social System*, Free Press, Illinois, 1959.

keeps the same form; it itself becomes inconstant, agitated... But when the soul examines things for itself, when it launches itself in the direction of what is pure, of what always exists -by virtue of its kinship with these pure beings- it is always with them that the soul comes to occupy the place to which it is entitled all the realization of its existence, in itself and for itself... When they are together, the soul and the body, to this nature consigns servitude and obedience, and to the first, command and landlord... Therefore, examine now Cebes, if all that has been said effectively leads us to the following conclusions: the soul resembles what is divine, immortal, endowed with the capacity to think, what has a unique form, what is indissoluble and always possesses the same identity; the body, on the contrary, equals what is human, mortal, multiform, devoid of intelligence, what is subject to decomposition, what never remains identical".⁴⁷ Finally, it was concluded that every body whose movement comes from outside is inanimate; every body that moves by itself, from its interior, is animate, this being precisely the nature of the psyche. As for Aristotle, his understanding is that the soul corresponds to the realization of a foreseen capacity (*entelechia*) and, therefore, the body's capacity to live and think is transmitted by the psyche, which makes it the true act of bodily function (*De Anima*, II, 1-412).

Considering now the notion and also the ideal of the person - an understanding that actually precedes and is complemented by that of the citizen - it is perceived that both education (from the formal, non-formal and informal points of view) and cultural action constitute means of development or enrichment of personality. This is because a person, already in Greek Antiquity (*prosopon*) indicates being able

⁴⁷ *Phaedo*, 79-80, portuguese version, The Thinkers, Abril Cultural, 1972.

to maintain, simultaneously, relations with himself (self-relationships) and with the outside world (hetero-relations). Therefore, and in Max Scheler's analysis, the person is the center in which the spiritual actions (*geistliche Taten*), such as will, reason, love, veneration, are manifested: "If the spirit, in its highest sense, is a particular mode of knowledge, a kind of knowledge which only it is capable of bringing, then the fundamental character of a 'spiritual' being is his existential detachment, his freedom, the possibility he has of getting rid of fascination and pressure from what is organic, of becoming independent of 'life' and all that concerns him and, consequently, of that part of the intelligence which is subject to innate tendencies. A spiritual subject thus understood is no longer constrained to pure desire or to the environment, but is liberated from the environment; we will soon say that he is 'open to the world', that he is a 'universe'".⁴⁸ Therefore, the notion of a person also contains that of a gradation, for there will be differences in *personality* to the extent that there is a greater or lesser possibility of acting voluntarily and consciously in the world, in society, and upon one's own body. And the construction of that autonomy does not, of course, dispense with educational and socio-cultural actions.

Generally, it can be said that cultural action and animation have in common to propose, stimulate or make possible knowledge, symbolic, social and also sensitive (bodily) experiences, and by such means institute a sense and an ideal of improved training and habit, both from an individual and collective point of view, as well as support the realization of works or subsidize artists or authors in the process

⁴⁸ *La situation de l'homme dans le monde (Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos)*, Aubier, Paris, 1951.

of creation. This search to embrace a totality, in fact never attainable, was taken by Pascal as something not only of a cognitive nature and life experience, but equally aesthetic: "As one cannot be universal and know everything that is possible to know everything, one must know a little of everything. For it is much more beautiful to know something of everything than to know everything of a thing; this universality is the most beautiful. If we could have both, it would be great, but if you have to choose, you have to choose that one".⁴⁹

For these reasons, it must be taken into account that, above all, cultural action is part of a humanist training project, whether it is already present in Paideia's idea, that of a complete civic education, by which the citizen is stimulated to participate in the management of the city and to exercise virtues more than addictions, be that of *studia humanitatis* or *studia humaniora* of the 14th and 15th centuries Italian (grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, moral philosophy), proposed by figures such as Petrarca, Coluccio Salutati, Guarino Veronese, Vittorino da Feltre, Lorenzo Valla, Leonardo Bruni or Leon Battista Alberti. Initially, humanism means the resumption of the *humanae litterae* (the profane literature of the Greco-Roman civilization), and no longer an almost exclusive dedication to the *sacrae litterae* (sacred-religious literature of the Medieval). More profoundly, however, its exact meaning corresponds, in the words of Eugenio Garin, not to an education "as is sometimes believed, limited to grammatical and rhetorical studies, but the formation of a truly human consciousness, open in all directions through historical and critical knowledge of cultural tradition".⁵⁰ Consequently, it refers to an

⁴⁹ *Thoughts* (Article I, On spirit and style, 37), portuguese version, Collection Os Pensadores, Abril Cultural, 1972.

⁵⁰ *Educazione umanistica in Italia*, La Terza, 1971.

extended spiritual formation, to a general culture permanently elaborated from a fact evident by its simplicity: that the human being is not put in the world entirely finished. On the contrary, he alone is capable of being perfected by knowledge, virtue and pleasure, conditions indispensable, in turn, to wisdom. This is also why the Italian Renaissance, in its cultural complexity, cannot be understood without the precession of that Florentine humanism.

Current ideas and practices

Immediately after the emergence of UNESCO, its technicians incorporated the idea of cultural animation (meeting in Mondsee, Austria, 1950), understanding it as "methods and techniques of adult education", exercised or applied outside conventional school systems.

But if the terms action and animation can be taken generically as synonyms, that is, as "pedagogical strategies of mediation or intervention", it is possible, however, to distinguish singular characteristics for each one of them.

Thus, cultural action could be understood as the planning, organization and realization of cultural activities or programs (artistic, craft, sports, recreational, social, intellectual, touristic etc.) aimed at isolated individuals, defined groups or a globally conceived community. In the former and in the latter case, it would be a socially "open" action, in which the public behaves more closely to that of a consumer of services. The Statute of the Sociocultural Animator, voted in the 5th International Congress of the category, held in Coimbra in 1999, thus defines the professional and, consequently, the objectives of his interference: "Sociocultural Animator is the one who,

having received an adequate formation, is capable of elaborating and executing an intervention plan in a community, institution or organism, using cultural, sports, recreational, playful or similar activities, having in view, in the last analysis, the development of the potentialities of the elements of the environment in which he is engaged, in order to provoke dynamics and to promote personal, group or community values".

The idea of animation should indicate a procedural work, with a longer term, which includes the nucleation, mobilization and orientation of a determined group, and with which the objectives to be achieved, the performance criteria and the resources to be employed are established. Thus understood, and as a procedural work, animation allows and stimulates the direct participation of its members or the collectivity in the achievement of the project, until such time as the group obtains autonomy of existence. Consequently, the activities take place in a circumscribed social environment, "closed", demanding from the agent or animator a more intensely affective dedication to the group or the elected community. Hence the Report to the High Committee of Youth on Animation, of the French government, adopted in the 1960s as a concept of socio-educational animation "any action in the midst of a group or collectivity that aims to develop internal communications and the structure of social life, using non-directive or semi-directive methods".

The great variety of contents, interpretations and contingencies that are present and, therefore, make the universe of cultural action imprecise, allows, in Augustin and Gillet's opinions,⁵¹ at least the

⁵¹ *L'animation professionnelle (histoire, acteurs, enjeux)*, Augustin, J.P. e J.C. Gillet, L'Harmattan, Paris, Montréal, 2000.

following contemporary understandings of this phenomenon: 1) an ideological current inherited from popular education movements and oriented towards the formation of a responsible, conscious, rational citizen; 2) an open pedagogical form, capable of awakening new interests, promoting discoveries and allowing expressiveness, personal or group; 3) a mode of social regulation that makes it possible to resolve or ease existing conflicts between tradition and modernity; 4) a detached educational policy, free, as or more effective than the formal educational system; 5) a form of current achievement and concrete expression of the civilization of leisure.

As previously mentioned, in the political-social presuppositions, cultural action maintains, in the first place, correspondence with the classic notions of patronage, indicating the social and economic relations of stimulus and favoring intellectual and artistic creation, of a professional nature or with tendencies towards professionalization. From this point of view, it maintains direct bonds of exchange between authors, interpreters or researchers and support organizations, in order to make possible the maintenance of the artist himself, artisan or intellectual, as well as the elaboration of his works. On the other hand, it may indicate the work of civil, public, private or community entities that promote the access of the population or specific clientele to cultural goods, or to activities, services and learning processes (medium and long term) and artistic, artisan, intellectual or bodily practices, in a leisure situation. Finally, cultural action may include the patrimonialist function of putting assets under governmental heritage, conservation and exhibition of historical collections, whether public or private, whether artistic, artisanal or scientific.

The need to favour and expand the possibilities of assistance, learning, creation or even public dissemination of knowledge

(theoretical and practical) and experiences (sensitive and cognitive), in the midst of a mass civilization, that is, of ubiquitous and homogeneous industrial products, led to the appearance of a cultural action that has, in principle, four characteristics of greater evidence: a) from a social point of view, the permanent intention of attracting and integrating individuals and groups of different ages and social strata to the artistic-cultural universe, linking them, as far as possible, to those actions that solve or minimize community problems; b) in relation to the content, to stimulate the knowledge and the coexistence of new or regular audiences with the less recurring or usual languages, expressions or signs - the "exceptions" - to mass culture, seeking to reveal their works, characteristics and meanings; or even choose and determine criteria by which to select those works that, elaborated entirely within the cultural industry, contain the necessary qualities to be disseminated with a different treatment (reorganized in specific cycles or themes, for example); c) under the organizational aspect, that of being a relatively structured and permanent form of institutional intervention, maintained by professionals with multidisciplinary training in cultural centers with multiple or specific activities, foundations or associations, or even by staff voluntarily committed to situations of need local; d) and finally, an identification with the political principles and objectives of permanent education (more specifically, those of a non-formal and informal nature). In other words, in a form of spontaneous and continuous education, although not always perceived, carried out outside the formal areas of the school and the work environment - self-training, individual development, self-education. On many occasions, these four facets are summarized in the somewhat diffuse slogan of *cultural democratization*.

A conception under discussion

It should be noted that the idea of cultural democratisation has different meanings and therefore a semantic ambiguity rarely grasped by studies of a cultural nature (in itself, that is, without the cultural adjective, democratisation refers us to the process and forms of distribution of powers and political decisions between all adult citizens of a state, or, in a more restricted social sphere, between all adult individuals belonging to primary or secondary groups).

It suggests, in the most idealistic discourses, a process that aims to make accessible to the whole population the symbolic works considered exemplary of humanity, as much as the canonical, artistic or scientific knowledge of past and present history. This was, for example, the spirit of the 18th century Enlightenment, advocated, for example, by Schiller in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, the same one that led André Malraux (although for a bias of religious communion) to assume the ministry of culture and to propose the houses of culture. Such a purpose requires, as prerequisites and necessary, and yet not sufficient, at least two criteria: a basic and continuing formal education (begun, therefore, in childhood or early adolescence) and multipurpose, eclectic, interdisciplinary or intercomplementary experiences. The reason is basically simple: what is called high culture constitutes a labyrinth, a complex web of objects, spheres and symbolic meanings that are constantly related, sometimes convergent and aggregate, sometimes conflicting and divergent. Moreover, high culture not only infiltrates or spreads through correlated areas, but also maintains correspondences with

forms and contents from past times and from previous or contemporary societies. Hence its epithet of *humanist*.

Now, contrary to current popular opinions, high culture is thus understood (without, of course, of ideological objectives) because it expresses what the highest and most brilliant human spirit has managed to think, imagine or create, even when stimulated for our common vices and depravities. Although one may disagree with the idea that Shakespeare is the beginning and center of our literary canon (and to make it go back to the Greeks), Harold Bloom's opinion about the importance and insurmountability of these model relationships is convincing because based on art history: "The burden of influence must be carried if it is to be achieved and returned to originality, within the richness of the western literary tradition. Tradition is not just a passing on or a process of benign transmission; it is also a conflict between past genius and present aspiration, the prize being literary survival or canonical inclusion ... Nothing is as essential to the Western Canon as its *principles of selectivity, which are only elitist insofar as they are based in strictly artistic criteria*".⁵² It can be seen that it is not difficult to agree with the critic, as it would be surprisingly paradoxical to value art and culture and disregard, at the same time, the quality of the works and the ability to judge, that is, to institute poetic principles or, in the case of sciences, veracity, conformity to the real.

Let us now take the example of language, the basis of any cultural act. One can respect the syntactic spontaneity of the popular classes or the particularisms of regional speech, which in this case enrich the prosody of language. It happens that the "popular or natural"

⁵² *The Western Canon*, Harcourt Brace, 1994.

language does not deal with more than 4 thousand words, remaining limited to a high rate of redundancy, simultaneously expressive and cognitive. The great majority of the cultured records reach 400,000 words. The conclusion is crystal clear: the one who dominates the high or cultured code has much more favorable conditions to understand and express the world, as much as to establish more complex or percucient relationships of cognitive, social, political and professional nature.

It is also worth remembering Bruno Lussato's arguments.⁵³ Culture, understood as a permanent process of increasing the complexity of the human spirit, must satisfy four conditions, in order to be fully considered. The first is to allow, in the contact between work and individual, a differentiation, that is, the fact that the mental system improves the distinction of forms and languages that previously seemed similar or indifferent. The second is to facilitate integration, that is, to allow the spirit to compare, link different elements and organize them into more complex mental structures. The third is the establishment of a hierarchy of values, as not everything is equivalent in the universes of knowledge and aesthetic experience. There are major and minor arts, deeper and shallower thoughts, a fact recognized by a pop-star like Serge Gainsbourg, and quoted by the author: "I practice a minor art, and the minor arts swallow the biggest ones". And yet, a coherent and hierarchical system of values is better than the complete absence of all of them. Finally, culture is not an easy thing. *It is not given, but forged, achieved.* It requires interest, effort, dedication, time, reflection and financial resources. Therefore, the acquisition of culture is done with

⁵³ *Bouillon de culture*, Robert Lafond, 1986

a view to increasing the possibility of personal choices, the capacity for reflection and judgment, as well as developing, at its maximum level, personality.

With a similar understanding, Alain Renaut comments on the criticisms made by authors such as Milan Kundera (The art of romance) and Alain Finkielkraut (Malaise in democracy): “In the cultural record, the conviction that any statement of individuality in any product would have a value as such would lead to *an aberrant canonization of each article offered by the leisure industry*, renouncing the distinction between rock and classical dance, theater and rap, folklore and cinema by Fellini, the tag and the music by Boulez, and supporting both, the democratic politics of culture embody, at best, this dullness of the spirit, starting with the critical spirit, before the sacralization of individuality and its productions”.

But cultural democratization may also mean that the characteristics and values of popular culture are those that predominate or should prevail socially and politically in a given society.

This understanding has at least three historical sources. The first of them is found in the romantic-bourgeois spirit that sought to oppose the art sponsored by the nobility and its ritualistic and conventional characteristics, the manifestations that, on the contrary, express the spontaneity, vitality, simplicity and cultural longevity of the popular classes, agrarian or urban. The second, which evidently does not shy away from ideological purposes, is in the movement of affirmation and the rise of the proletariat, with the political thought of the various shades of the left as its mainstay. The third constitutes the progressive formation of a cultural industry (with its commercial and profit objectives) that gathered in the forms, contents and popular

mentalities the symbolic and artistic materials that it needed to remake them as mass products (from newspapers, magazines, circuses, parties and music halls of the 19th century, including cinema, radio and television from the 20th century). It is for this reason that Paulo Sérgio Rouanet, commenting on the prevailing irrationalism and anti-elitism today, states: “It is very different ... to defend popular culture, which has as little to do with mass culture as socialism has to do with populism. It is obvious that it is an especially valuable asset and needs to be protected in order not to disappear. But protected from what? Not against high culture, national or foreign, but against mass culture, national and foreign. What threatens the survival of folcloric literature is not Finnegans Wake, but the soap opera on TV”.⁵⁴

Therefore, this second understanding values, above all, the manifestations of the popular universe itself, be it traditional and of agrarian origin, be it modern and urban, concerned with the support of its conditions of existence, with the diffusion of its manifestations in other collectivities equally popular or in learned circles and with the expansion of opportunities for their artists or artisans.

But when we adopt this last judgment of cultural democratization, the question will naturally fit, or consequently, the question: what would it really mean to democratize a culture that already originates, manifests itself and represents the spirit and habits of the people?

Consider also that popular and mass cultures tend to be, each in their own way, the masters of their existence, understanding for this reason the tendency not to usually mix with other provinces of art and thought and not to aspire greater densities or depths. In this case, the

⁵⁴ *O novo irracionalismo brasileiro* (The new Brazilian irrationalism), in “As razões do iluminismo” (The Reasons of Enlightenment), Cia. das Letras, 1987.

simple preponderance of the popular universe paves the way for the condemnation of high culture, classified as elitist, distant or abstract, which reinforces the already known and visceral antitraditionalism of modern cult art, extremely influenced both by the spontaneity of popular art and by parodic and youthful spirit of mass culture.

A third possible understanding, with its apocalyptic or integrative aspects, concerns the ability of the cultural industry to break down barriers of class and educational levels and thus democratize - in the sense of making popularly known and accessible - information, symbols and values that accompany them. In this case, it is about the unlimited expansion of the production, sale and purchase of aesthetic and imaginative goods, which, in the opinion of its defenders, allows every individual to access a set of goods that were previously reserved, economically, for the rich and, politically, for the powerful or for the ruling strata.

Such a view can be found, for example, in Herbert Gans,⁵⁵ for whom buyers and spectators react to products or respond to mass culture emissions and thus contribute to creating their forms and content, due to the so-called feedback or retroactive effect by they generated. We find ourselves here with the commonplace argument of the sovereign consumer: "In a democratic society, a politically pertinent judgment should begin by taking into account the fact that cultural goods are chosen by people and that they cannot exist without them". For Gans, a debate about cultural levels proves fruitless, as they have no decisive importance on social behavior: "If people are able to affirm their own aesthetic preferences and find cultural forms that satisfy them, it becomes possible , whatever your

⁵⁵ *Popular culture and high culture*, Basic Books, NY, 1974.

level, to fulfill and manage your free time in a satisfactory way, that is, with a minimum of boredom ". In short, cultural democratization would correspond here to an aesthetic pluralism freely exercised, without subjective constraints and traditional constraints (family, ethnic, class, educational, etc.). "The poor, explains the author, have the right to their own culture like any other ... and, in any case, democracies must work, and in any case they work, even if their citizens are not educated ... (because) the cultural level of a society is less important than a decent (material) standard of living".

But if this universe of arts and knowledge has been produced and disseminated industrially since the 19th century, in all and by all means of mass communication, it is no longer this form of hegemonic, aesthetic, social and political culture, that is, even from a Gramscian point of view? Here, one can resort to the existing links between postmodernism and popular culture, as Dominic Strinati⁵⁶ presents them, in summary: "... postmodernism is considered to describe the birth of a social order in which the mass media and popular culture govern and shape all other forms of social relationships ... The idea is that the signs of popular culture and the images conveyed by the media increasingly dominate our sense of reality and the way we define ourselves and see the world around us ... Furthermore, it is said that in the postmodern condition there is an increasing difficulty in distinguishing economics from popular culture. The realm of consumption - what we buy and what determines what we buy - is increasingly influenced by popular culture. Popular culture determines consumption. For example, we watch more films because of the spread of VCRs ... If popular culture signs and media images are

⁵⁶ *Cultura popular, uma introdução* (Popular Culture, an introduction). Portuguese version, Hedra, São Paulo, 1999.

taking on the role of defining the sense of reality for us, and if that means that style takes priority over content, it therefore becomes more difficult to maintain a significant distinction between art and popular culture. There is no longer a unanimous and inviolable criterion that differentiates art and popular culture. Which brings us to the fear of mass culture critics, who feared the possible subversion of classical culture by mass culture”. Therefore, *why should institutions of an artistic-cultural nature be concerned with reproducing or reinforcing, second-hand, what already proliferates, is entirely commercialized and dominates socio-cultural practices?*

This form of democratization, however, in the eyes of its opponents, only means that we have become ordinary consumers, that is, neither sovereign nor autonomous, but rather addicted witnesses to offers of entertainment and an egalitarian commercial demand, which makes homogeneous the investment logic, indistinctly applied to soaps or editorial lines. Today, in practice, almost all the production of objects or symbolic works comes from the cultural industry and passes through the media system. Now, the very fast speed of this production and the inexhaustible substitution of its goods give the “modern democratized and globalized” culture a status of fashion, epiphenomenon, contingency, immediacy and profitability.

But a cultural good - in its primitive and distinctive sense - is not something functional and utilitarian, which responds to an immediate need in everyday life. A truly cultural asset appears as a phenomenon that transforms and exceeds vital needs and thus establishes potential immortality (in the words of Hannah Arendt). Or, in Benjamin's opinion, which is inspired by the tradition of Greco-Roman poetics, a work of authentic culture needs to gain distance (*Entfernung*), which means to depart from the immediate life. For this

reason, the logic that guides the production and consumption of everyday goods in use - in the latter case, their destruction - cannot be the same as that of artistic-cultural goods. And yet, it is precisely this egalitarian phenomenon that mass culture or the cultural industry pursues in its voracity. In this regard, let us see the opinion of the German thinker: "From the point of view of pure duration, works of art are clearly superior to all others; as they last the longest in the world, they are the most mundane of things ... speaking properly, they are not made for men, but for the world, for what remains beyond the limited life of mortals and the back and forth of generations ... The relatively new difficulty with the mass society is perhaps even more serious, not because of the masses themselves, but because such a society is essentially a consumer, and leisure time does not serve for improvement, but for increasing fun. ... everything happens as if life went beyond its limits to use things that were never made for it. The result is certainly not a mass culture, which in fact does not exist, but a mass leisure that feeds on cultural objects of the world".⁵⁷

Back to topic

At least theoretically, it is not for cultural action to reproduce the conformist, irrational or pure entertainment values that can be found, with a certain ease and appeal, in mass culture. For these cultural "demands", their own market is in charge.

More commonly, the work of cultural agents is geared towards the realization of processes and the promotion of services, that is, to boost and change the state or situations that lead to intellectual,

⁵⁷ *La Crise de la culture*, Galimard, folio-essais, Paris, 1972.

cognitive, sensitive (aesthetic) enrichment, associative, social or even corporal, and which may occur as differentiated opportunities are established in the face of daily attitudes, experiences and common sense.

There would be two perspectives here, not always excluding: 1) *cultural literacy*, understood as one that stimulates, facilitates access and addresses learning and mastery of knowledge and minimal skills in the fields of artistic, intellectual or bodily expressions, for a public amateur, amateur or semi-professional (workshops and workshops, courses, training and educational programs); 2) *cultural diffusion*, which has as a reference programmed and open events, marked by the experience of hearing or the presence of the public as a spectator (concerts, festivals, exhibitions, tournaments and shows), aimed at establishing a “habit”.

A possible definition

The cultural action or animation constitutes an intervention that is simultaneously technical, political, social and economic, carried out by the government or by private organizations of civil society, which conceives, coordinates, manages or participates in programs, projects and activities related to: 1) training or learning techniques and / or craft, artistic and scientific knowledge; 2) diffusion of symbolic works and aesthetic experiences through shows, festivals, exhibitions, debates, seminars; 3) formation and development of social groups, with their specific and general objectives of improving life, in defense of civil rights or citizenship - groups of the elderly, adolescents, women, neighborhoods, environmental protection etc; 4) popular education, linked to delimited themes, but with informal

treatment and voluntary adherence - literacy, scientific and technological vulgarization, dynamization of libraries, craft or DIY skills, languages etc; 5) formation or learning of body and sports skills - courses and training; 6) dissemination of sports (games, tournaments, championships) and recreational activities; 7) social tourism (on holidays, weekends, camps); 8) conservation and popularization of access and knowledge to historical, scientific and artistic heritage and collections; 9) creation or encouragement of the formation of centers or cultural information and training movements in small and medium-sized communities; 10) training of volunteer, semi-professional or professional staff of agents or animators.

In broad lines, therefore, the discourse of cultural action follows the humanist or Enlightenment tradition of the plurality of experiences and the diversity of thinking, assuming that, through it, new individual and collective actions can be generated. That stimulates the autonomy of taste, the multiplication of possibilities of the imaginary, of intellectual perceptions, or social contacts, for example. Therefore, its field of work is wide enough to cover the most varied subjects and perspectives. In this process of dynamization, the habit of learning and living with artistic and intellectual expressions and with major contemporary themes becomes essential: understanding and popularizing science; the role and perspectives of technology; ecological ruin; the densification of human dramas in the urban environment; efforts to overcome material poverty conditions; renewed social and economic conflicts; mentalities related to sex and the body; the role, transformations or importance of social, political and religious institutions, etc.

It is also an effort of reflection and proposition that, in summary: a) offers opportunities for the creation, understanding and diffusion of

non-industrialized cultural goods; b) know how to select and seek to disseminate, with clear criteria, manifestations and qualitatively important works, generated within the mass culture. Therefore, the entire system of symbols that summarizes and represents cultural behaviors and creations is part of its possible universe. At the end of the line, there is a fight against barbarism and, consequently, in favor of a civilizing process. And yet, the great difficulties of cultural action are right there. First, any process of change is only noticeable in the long run, and the instruments for measuring it are ambiguous or contradictory (cause and effect relationships). That is, they often depend on external factors - political, economic, etc. Secondly, cultural action takes place in delimited, discontinuous and irradiation power spaces that are more fragile than those used by mass culture. Perhaps it is indispensable, without abandoning live and direct contact with traditional intellectual and artistic manifestations (plastic arts exhibitions, scenic shows, regular courses or experimental internships, debates and seminars, etc.), that it join or incorporate means electronic and advertising as instruments for its permanent dissemination.

Alongside an artistic-cultural life that takes place modernly and predominantly as a goods market, whether industrialized or not (art auctions, for example), cultural action intervenes, at its best, as a carrier of other values: the reduction of cultural inequalities and, therefore, social differences; the opportunity for the evolution of new talents; the analysis of ideologies and worldviews; experimentation and the awakening of new interests; the formation of audiences, skills and behaviors that improve the humanistic character; or the search, retrieval and analysis of facts, documents or historical records. Hence its importance and, at the same time, its public responsibility.

Because the fact that an institution or agency creates or sponsors a particular project or event, it indicates, clearly or implicitly, that it assumes an ethical or moral commitment, of approval and merit to that activity that it developed or helped to carry out. This commitment must reflect or be protected by: a) adequacy between the theoretical aspects and the practical configuration of the action - definition and clarity of purposes; b) the transmission of unusual, innovative or enriching content from everyday life - quality of action; c) correct and adapted treatment of information and activities to the socio-cultural environment in which it develops - political pedagogy of action; d) the possibility of developments that deepen the experience - formal scope of the action.

IV) Cultural Policy

Cultural policy means, initially, the set of interventions and decisions by public authorities through programs and artistic-intellectual or generically symbolic activities of a society, conducted in the name of the general interest or the common good of a community, although from this scope it is usually excluded (but not always) the policy of education or formal teaching.

As it could not be historically different, monarchical governments or aristocratic regimes were the first to create institutions or apply resources of this nature. What follows, however, refers to a brief retrospective of the twentieth century, when the expression is formally established.

It concerns the cultural action of the State or the Public Power and covers both the legal framework of levies, incentives and protection of goods and activities, as well as: 1) principles, rules and methods of action; 2) administrative bodies or structures in charge of them; 3) management or forms of support for institutions, groups, programs or projects; 4) maintenance or diffusion of works and artistic-intellectual processes; 5) preservation and use of heritage, material or immaterial assets.

Soviet Union – The Narkompros

As an official, systematic and institutionalized intervention, which through it recognizes the socio-cultural importance of the arts, intellectual productions and historical collections, cultural policy, in the public or republican sense of expression, emerged in the early 20th

century, integrating the logic of the Soviet Union's economic, social and educational planning, as well as the task of its ideological propaganda. It was the well-known "Commissariat of Popular Education" (*Narodnyy Komissariat Prosveshcheniya*), established in 1917 in Petrograd (Saint Petersburg), but whose operation, in fact, only started in March 1918, in Moscow, being directed, initially, by literary critic Anatole Lunacharski and Lenin's companion, Nadezhda Krupskaya, under the acronym *Narkompros*.⁵⁸ It was attributed concomitant and quite complicated functions at the time, at least due to the gigantism of the tasks: literacy and public education, scientific-technological and artistic policies, with the latter having the most varied expressions, distributed in specific departments: dramaturgy (Teo), music (Muzo), literature (Lito), palace and museum collections, libraries, the academy of fine arts, graphic arts (Izo), photography and cinema (Foto-Kino) and a new program, Proletkult (Proletariat Cultural Organization). Narkompros was also involved with the traveling Bolshevik Party project, agitprop (agitatsiya-propaganda), with the purpose of forming groups and presenting political agitation and propaganda shows, whose members were transported in boats and trains to areas under the control of the Red Army. The project remained active only during the civil war.

At the same time serving all the bodies of the super ministry, a publishing department (*Gosizdat*) was also created.

The suggestion of having an exclusive arts ministry separately was ideologically countered by its leaders, for whom this would be "the inheritance of a purely despotic regime, the survival of a time when

⁵⁸ Different translations are suggested, including the French "people's commissariat for public education" or "popular commissariat for instruction", the German "people's commissariat for cultural training", the English "commissariat for illustration" and Hispanic -Portuguese "state commissioner for culture".

art was completely under the control of the Palace”.⁵⁹ Art, education and science should, therefore, be thought and managed together, and Russia would reach a higher stage of development when “educated in art”, in the words of Olga Kameneva, who was then in charge of the Moscow theater section.

The first difficulties of such great pretension were felt shortly after the inauguration of the ministerial group, because, according to Lunacharski himself, he declared to the newspaper *Novaya zhizn*, “we have noticed that any hollow-head clerk soon seeks us, but all intellectual workers (*ideinye*) they insist that we are usurpers ... it will be easier to build everything again than to take old and decaying institutions into account”.⁶⁰

In the educational sphere (*Politprosvet*), and in order to raise the extremely low level of education, the Commissioner launched a national literacy campaign and created the public, free and compulsory education project until the age of 17 - the single school of work -, conceived to unite the humanities with agricultural and industrial knowledge, within an initially polytechnic perspective, but progressively specialized. According to subsequent analyzes by the International Education Planning Institute, a UNESCO body, although the system has managed to increase enormously the number of university students (from 127 thousand in the period 1914-1915 to 811 thousand in the academic year 1940-1941), the quality of Formation remained at poor levels, both due to the low admission requirements and the extremely rigid ideological guidelines.

⁵⁹ Lunacharski's opinion to the Education Committee, formally delivered on 5/4/1918.

⁶⁰ Cited by Sheila Fitzpatrick in *The Commissariat of Enlightenment*, Cambridge Press, 1970.

Many artists from the futuristic and abstractionist avant-garde participated in the commission's staff and departments, as directors, advisers or teachers, such as Tatlin, Malevich, Rodchenko, Kandinsky, Maiakovski, Shterenberg or Punin, at least until the beginning of the Stalinist purges and option for "socialist realism". However, in Fitzpatrick's opinion, "members of the literary and radical intelligentsia boycotted, in principle, the Commissioner, as an organ of Soviet power". The artistic world, concentrated in Petrograd and Moscow, had previously intended to gain wide autonomy, removing old political, aesthetic and financial dependencies from the tsarist government. A perspective that soon proved to be completely illusory, from the moment when even civilian organizations, made up of prestigious artists and professionals, such as the Union of Arts (Soyuz Deyatelei Iskusstv), were constrained to exercise their activities under the strict guidance of central power and the Narkompros. Even intellectuals known to the left and close to revolutionary ideals, such as Gorki or Tikhonov, did not believe that an organ with so many responsibilities and lack of resources could achieve any efficiency. Maiakovski, for example, only admitted in late 1918 to cooperate with IZO, as he had "finally understood that the struggle for new art could only be promoted within Soviet organizational forms".⁶¹

With regard to the properly artistic universe, the biggest concerns and the most immediate actions of the first years were concentrated in only three areas, considered indispensable for the preservation of heritage and maintenance of companies: that of the former imperial theaters (Aleksandrinsky, Mariinsky and Mikhailovsky), in St. Petersburg, that of the Academy of Arts, with centers in St. Petersburg

⁶¹ Cited by O. Brik in *Literaturnyi kritik*, n° 4, 1936.

and Moscow (dissolved and reformed in 1918), and that of palaces and collections. Gradually, however, the intellectuals “joined it (*Narkompros*) in large numbers and the arts departments proliferated from people beyond any functional rationality and to the detriment of the ministry's reputation among other government and party organizations”.⁶² In response to this situation, which had already increased tenfold in 1919, the number of existing employees under the old regime, there was a small rationalization of resources in 1920 and a deeper reform in the following year.

Criticisms of the faltering policy and compromises that *Narkompros* had been maintaining were evident during the Bolshevik Party's Meeting on Education, held between December 31, 1920 and January 4, 1921. Lunacharski and Krupskaya's opponents, including Evgraf Litkens, friend of Trotsky and in charge of proposing a new model, Grigori Grinko and Otto Schmidt, wanted professional education, from the last two grades of secondary education, to be the most comprehensive and determining task of the Commissioner, following the trends already adopted by Grinko in Ukraine. The function or role of the arts, therefore, should be entirely subordinate to the practical and technical needs of specialized education and the construction of the Soviet state. The dispute between the defenders of polytechnic education (and independence of the artistic field) and those of specialized education required Lenin's direct intervention. In an ambiguous decision, or of a mutual concession, the leader recommended that the party's Central Committee authorize the reformulation of the organ, contemplating two objectives: in view of the industrialization and technical-specialized production needs, the

⁶² Fitzpatrick, op. Cit.

reform of *Narkompros* would have, as an immediate task, vocational education; in theory, and for the future, the ideal of polytechnic and universalist education was preserved. The new organization then came to be formed by three main bodies: that of professional education (*Glavprofobr*), that of socio-school education (*Glavsotsvos*) and that of educational policy (*Glavpolitprosvet*), in addition to an Academic College, subdivided into academic and artistic sections, a Museum Administration, an Archives Administration and the Publications Department.

Brazil - Pensionato Artístico (Artistic Patronage) and the Department of Culture of São Paulo

The first republican achievements of a political and cultural nature in the State of São Paulo were led by intellectual characters who, directly or indirectly, contributed to the modernist movement.

In 1912, through Decree nº 2.234, the government approved the creation of the Artistic Patronage, submitted to the Interior Affairs Secretariat. Its holder at the time, Deputy Altino Arantes, had defended, in the project, the idea of a body that would offer annual scholarships to plastic artists and national classical musicians, with the intention of making them improve in Europe, especially in Paris and Rome, in view of the fact that there are no schools or similar organizations in the State (it was a question of resuming a practice from the second empire, the Travel Award, created in 1845 and regulated as a patronage in 1855).⁶³ Freitas Valle assumed the

⁶³ The regulation provided that candidates should be citizens of São Paulo, be between 12 and 25 years old and demonstrate recognized talent for painting, sculpture, music or singing.

direction of the institution's fiscal council, in charge of selecting the candidates, indicating the teaching centers and places of residence. Although other important figures of the *belle époque*, such as Ramos de Azevedo, Sampaio Viana, Olívia Guedes Penteado or Oscar Rodrigues Filho, alternately took part in the selection, in practice the choice of the candidate was always decided by Freitas Valle. The scholarships were long-term, usually five years, and the artists undertook to send reports with proof of their ordinary activities and productions. Among others, Anita Malfatti, Victor Brecheret, Túlio Mugnaini, Leonor Aguiar, Francisco Mignone and Souza Lima benefited. This kind of boarding school-house remained until April 1931, when the new tenentist republic dismissed Freitas Valle and reformed the organ, creating, in its place, the *Artistic Orientation Council*.

In a much more comprehensive way and, therefore, a pioneer in the country, the City of São Paulo created, in 1935, the Department of Culture and Recreation, created by Paulo Duarte and whose management was handed over to Mário de Andrade. The body was composed, over the course of the decade, by the following Divisions: Cultural Expansion, Libraries, Education and Recreation and Historical and Social Documentation.

The first of these, Expansion, housed three sections: that of Theaters and Cinemas, in charge of the musical activities of the symphony orchestra, the São Paulo choir and educational cinema projects; Radio School was responsible for broadcasts of classical music and children's educational programs; the section of the Public Discotheque, which began in 1936, was intended to build and maintain folkloric and classical musical collections through on-site recordings, discs and scores.

The Library Division was subdivided into Municipal, Circulating and Children's and proposed, in addition, to the examination, receipt in donation or purchase of private bibliographic collections for inclusion in public collections.

The Education and Recreation Division took care of the areas of physical activity, amateur sports and pre-school education in municipal parks.

The Historical and Social Documentation Division was responsible for archiving, restoring, translating and publishing texts. It was also subordinated to *Revista do Arquivo* (Archive Review), a periodical devoted to the publication of studies or research of an ethnographic nature.

The Department also ran some musical, theatrical and student reading contests about the country. The latter type, the reading contest, stipulated a theme and the bibliography to be consulted, offering prizes for the best analyzes, submitted to judgment.

In 1937, still under the municipal government of Fábio Prado, a new project was designed in the Department of Culture, that of *Casas de Cultura* (Houses of Culture),⁶⁴ which never came to fruition. It involved the implementation of small centers built in popular neighborhoods, furthest from the center, provided with a conference room, room for a "popular club" (parlor games, newspaper reading, collective radio hearing, dance), activity room artists, library, gym and professional guidance service for young people.

From 1938, however, with the arrival of Prestes Maia at the city hall, the Department began to suffer cuts in programs and funds. More concerned with urban reform and road expansion works, Prestes

⁶⁴ As a simple name, it precedes in more than 20 years the program of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the De Gaulle Government, under the responsibility of André Malraux.

adopted a legalistic position under current laws at the time, according to which official spending on education and culture should continue as the responsibility of the States. Still, he agreed with the creation of the Municipal Ballet School.

France - The first exclusive ministry and the Houses of Culture

From 1932, when it was installed, the Ministry of National Education housed the Secretariat of State for Fine Arts, converted into the General Direction of Arts and Letters in 1945. Under its guidance and management, for example, National Superior School of Fine Arts, the National Conservatory of Music and the National Superior School of Decorative Arts. With the advent of the Popular Front, the notion and denomination of “cultural policy” began to take shape. The rapporteur of the artistic budget foreseen for 1937 justified his reasons: “The deep masses of the French population spoke out for bread, peace and freedom. The bread of the spirit is also in their fundamental demands. We must stop looking at art as the reserved domain of the wealthiest classes, the experts and the snobs who dishonour it. Art must be brought closer to the people. It must be close to the people who have achieved considerable intellectual development, while at the same time opening the way to social progress, (getting closer) particularly to those millions of workers who have or will have more leisure and for whom it is necessary to find an enjoyable use, beneficial to each one and to the whole of society. Culture must become republican in the etymological sense of the word, that is, it must be an integral part of the public thing”.⁶⁵ The

⁶⁵ Philippe Poirrier, *L'état et la culture en France au XXème siècle*, Le Livre de Poche, Paris, 2000.

Centres of Artistic Education and Youth Hostels were then born and, in 1946, the new constitution expressly declared it to be the State's mission to guarantee all citizens access to culture.

Even so, the second moment of international repercussion on cultural policies (after *Narkompros*) occurred with the installation of the V French Republic (1959) and with André Malraux's conceptions and initiatives at the head of a comprehensive ministry, that of Cultural Affairs, although it is known that the organ was specially created to guarantee a new status for the writer, and not the result of a political conception previously conceived. The new administration was responsible for “the mission of making accessible the capital works of humanity, and primarily those of France, to the largest possible number of French people: ensuring the widest audience for our cultural heritage and favoring the creation of works of art and spirit that enrich you” (Decree of July 24). And there were three, together, the news or the factors that founded or gave shape to a specific cultural policy: 1) an expressed ideological intention; 2) a state philosophy of selective support for professional artistic creation; 3) its own budget, administrative structure and modes of operation.

Unlike the experiences of popular education that the older civil institutions implemented, the cultural action of the state (as Malraux and Gaëtan Picon also called it, the latter one of the ideologues of the new body and director of its Arts and Letters department during the first decade of the ministry) should correspond to a project that was both social and aesthetic without didactic or pedagogical concerns (teaching) or with artistic amateurism, dedicating itself exclusively to its professionals. Such an option meant moving away from some institutions such as ministry of Education or bodies such as the High Commission for Youth and Sports and making cultural

democratization a living experience, i.e., that of placing the public in the real presence and without intermediation of a work of art - visitation, audience, listening and reading. Integrally, art only fulfills its mission of civilization and aesthetic satisfaction if the public can have direct, constant, lasting contact with it. And, from a socio-political point of view, cultural action only acquires value if the great majority of the people can get to know the works of art and make them objects of coexistence, pleasure, mirror of life and reflection.

Therefore, a cultural policy should be self-outlined as a distinctly perceptible intervention, requiring its own doctrine and objectives. An attempt at elucidation can be found in certain pronouncements by Picon and Malraux, in which the fields of culture, education and leisure are separated. The following four quotations were taken from *L'invention de la politique culturelle* (Urfalino, Ph, Hachette, 2004): "In contemporary society, three domains appear clearly, three with which we have tried to identify this notion of culture: that of school and university education; that of entertainment, by which we see the State sustaining some spectacles or directing what we call leisure; and that of artistic creation which concerns the individual, but in which the State cannot fail to intervene in some degree, either because it wants to dignify free creation (as in liberal regimes), or because it tries to control it and command the game (as in totalitarian systems). If the creation of a Ministry of Culture is fully justified, as I believe, it is because there is an essential area that is neither teaching, nor entertainment, nor artistic creation".⁶⁶ "...for years it was believed that the problem of culture was a problem of leisure administration. It is time to understand that these are two different things, one being just

⁶⁶ *La culture et l'état* (Culture and State), Gaëtan Picon's conference held in March 1962 at the Havre Museum and House of Culture.

the vehicle of the other. A car is always a car, but when it takes us somewhere it's not the same thing as when it makes us fall on a cliff. There is no culture without leisure, but leisure is just a means to culture".⁶⁷ "Where is the borderline (between education and culture)? National education teaches: what we should do is convert education into something present... It is up to the university to make Racine known, but it is only up to those who stage her to make her loved. Our job is to make the geniuses of humanity loved, and especially those of France; but not to make them known. Knowledge is a matter for the university; it is perhaps up to us to love".⁶⁸ And finally: "As universities are the places where the finished image of past cultures is transmitted, the houses of culture will be the places where the unfinished image of present culture will be shown to those who participate in it, without knowing for this very reason that they model it".⁶⁹

The "love" for culture, as Malraux and his prestigious team wanted, was approaching a certain religious mission, like that created by the church in the Middle Ages. In a very simplified way, Malraux defended the idea that, at that time, the faithful lived not from knowledge, but from Revelation, from the Legend. The adhesion contained an amalgam of reverence and aesthetic admiration, feelings gathered in the liturgies and in the mystery of the sacrament. Now, in a scientific age, only the artistic genius could relive the communion of such feelings or affections.

Between 1960 and 1961, a new policy was drawn up, that of the Houses of Culture, under the coordination of the prize-winning

⁶⁷ André Malraux's speech at the Bourbon Palace, November 1963.

⁶⁸ Malraux's speech to the Senate, December 1959.

⁶⁹ G.Picon, *La Culture et l'État*.

novelist Pierre Moinot, with the aim of distinguishing it very clearly from the actions and programmes of the Houses of Youth and Culture (MJC), maintained by the High Commission for Youth and Sports. During 1961, the project of the Houses of Culture was proposed and discussed at the meetings of the IV Plan, within the commission in charge of "cultural equipment and artistic heritage". And at the end of that last year, its application and the concomitant construction of the operational units were handed over to the Directorate of Theatre, Music and Cultural Action, under the leadership of Émile Biasini.

In short, the most accentuated characteristics of the new policy were concentrated on the following aspects: the assistance or the lively hearing of the demonstrations, capable of provoking, in the most novices or unaccustomed, the "artistic shock"; the absence of didacticism, as it moved away from the already secular popular education movement; versatility or openness to all artistic forms (although theater and music have been privileged); the commitment to professionalism and the demand for the highest quality;⁷⁰ the debate on related issues (seminars, symposia); and collective travel. Regarding this last program, Moinot exemplified it this way: "to watch Mozart in Salzburg and Shakespeare in Stratford on Avon". In addition, the Houses of Culture would have to be installed in the main centers throughout the national territory and allow any citizen to access their activities at low cost.

As has always been the case in the field of cultural policies, the enthusiasm of the beginning has cooled with the budget allocations

⁷⁰ Either we renounce the houses of culture or else it is essential that they communicate the image of a certain coherence, a certain unity. If we take the cultural domain as a fact, without making any judgment of value, it appears as the juxtaposition of incompatible tendencies and works. Who can imagine that the role of the houses of culture is to show the image of chaos like this? We would do nothing but read aloud the bookshop catalog or the programs announced at the Week in Paris". Picon, *La culture et l'état*.

approved by the Ministry of Finance (led, at the time, by Giscard D'Estaing) for the first quadrennium of the organization, that of 1962-1965. The forecast of 85.6 million new francs was greatly reduced, to the point that Biasini wrote in the 1962 annual report: "Unfortunately, we do not have an Olympic catastrophe in our medal table".

The political, student and generational movement of 1968, with all its iconoclastic virulence, head-on attacked the politics of the houses of culture, accused of acting "in favor of a hereditary, particularist, simply bourgeois culture". At the time of the fall of De Gaulle and his entire government in 1969, only nine units were operating or in the process of being inaugurated, most of them adapted in existing buildings and not always properly revitalized: Le Havre (rebuilt by Oscar Niemeyer at the end of the 1970s), Caen, Bourges, East Paris-Bobigny, Amiens, Thonon, Firminy, Grenoble and Nevers.

Since 1970, already under the direction of Jacques Duhamel, cultural policy has followed different paths and nomenclatures. The strong expression became that of "cultural development" (instead of cultural action), based on the following criteria: creation of Cultural Intervention Funds (FIC), coming from other government areas, for application in new projects, proposed by civil society groups; replacement of investment in Houses of Culture by more sparse or unpretentious equipment, the Cultural Action Centres, intended preferably for the animation of amateur groups and not so much for professional artistic creation. By the way, the then new minister said: "... next to cathedrals, churches are needed; in the same way, if it is true that the House of Culture has passed the test, it does not exhaust

all levels of animation, which must also be more diffuse and, above all, more modest".⁷¹

Finally, under Jack Lang, cultural actions acquired multiple meanings. In a first aspect, they were seen as equally economical enterprises, receiving solid financing, which made public policy an echo or an aid to the production capacity of cultural industries (cinema, graphic and industrial drawings, haute couture, recording industry). Under a second, as festive and celebratory scenic shows, mobilizing large masses. In these two cases, the actions were supported, whenever possible, in strong advertising campaigns. A third line of conduct was dedicated to the direct subsidization of artists, mainly plastics, with the concomitant formation of contemporary collections, through purchases. In fact, his phrase has become a cliché: "the ministry of culture is, above all, the ministry of artists". Without artists, there is no creation, which means "the agitation caused in the domains of forms, tastes and ideas". Still with him and in the following governments, he sought contact with new and still marginalized audiences - young people from the peripheries, unemployed, immigrants - and the valorization of his artistic-cultural forms, tracing the lines of the so-called multiculturalism (see, about it, the last chapter).

Other State intervention agencies and models

Post-war economic prosperity, including the revaluation of nationalist expressions in countries newly settled or members of the so-called "third world", also stimulated the emergence of specific

⁷¹ Urfalino, op. cit.

cultural policy institutions, objectives and budgets, although this has remained at a lower status than other public policies.

With the concomitant actions of the UN, Unesco and the world or regional conferences on the subject, the thesis has been defended that cultural policy is necessarily incorporated into projects for the evolution and improvement of society. In other words, it would not be an additional or derived component, but an indispensable field of national or regional policies. Thus, for example, Article 27 of the Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to freely integrate into the cultural life of the community, to appreciate the arts and to participate in scientific progress and the benefits that result from it. The document *Problems and Perspectives* (Unesco, 1982) defends the notion that "... development should not be limited to the economic field (which is a means); it presupposes that the objectives of growth are defined equally in terms of cultural valorisation, collective and individual enrichment, general well-being and preservation of environments (urban and natural)". In other terms, the existence of a cultural policy - provided it is coherent, broad and effective - constitutes a form of expansion of knowledge and symbolic practices, of social integration and of the exercise of citizenship.

In practice, however, that is, in dependence on a predominant ideological orientation or even on a tradition of mentality within the state apparatus, cultural policies vary between objectives and commitments which, at the extremes, are characterized as: partisan of statism (of strong intervention) and liberals (of weak commitment), nationalists and cosmopolitans, gradualists and revolutionaries, elitists and populists, traditionalists and modernists. Commenting on the already established forms of public patronage, Rosarie Garon writes: "A variety of institutions were created (in the second half of the

20th century) and multiple means were developed according to economic systems and political traditions. In Europe, two types of structure predominate: a ministry in charge of cultural affairs or an arts council, depending on whether the administration is entrusted to a direct administration or to an autonomous body. Countries with British influence have preferred to entrust the management of public funding to an Arts Council, while countries with a more centralised tradition have opted for a ministry or public administration department. But, in reality, these types of organisation are not always distributed so clearly. In Italy, for example, two ministries are in charge of different fields of culture (Cultural Goods and Environment, and Tourism and Shows). In Canada, the Arts Council offers grants to artistic bodies and groups and distributes scholarships, while the Ministry of Communications intervenes more closely in the cultural industry" (*The Institutionalised Management of Public Sponsorship*).

Harry Hillman-Chartrand proposed a typology of cultural policies in line with the greater or lesser extent of interventionist government. For the author (The Arm's Length Principle and the Arts), there would be basically four types: that of the facilitating state, which finances the arts and intellectual creations through indirect, fiscal resources, offered to the private initiative (people, foundations, companies), a typical case in the United States; that of the patron or sponsor state, which transfers its own resources, that is, budget appropriations, to autonomous institutions, such as foundations and councils of representatives. In this way, the aim is to avoid, at least theoretically, partisan influences in the allocation of funds. Examples of this are England, Australia or New Zealand; the architect state is the one that dictates guidelines or takes direct and practical measures on the artistic-cultural dynamics of the country through its own structures

(ministry, secretariats, commissions). Together with the grants offered, technical and bureaucratic criteria are required to be followed by the beneficiaries. This is where most European and Latin American countries are located. Finally, there is the engineering or authoritarian state which fully governs the cultural life of the country, such as that of political dictatorships (left and right) and fundamentalist or theocratic communities.

V) Cultural Rights and Multiculturalism

Returning to the considerations of the initial chapter, we could say that the construction of the first citizenship, politics, constituted what, more recently, Alain Touraine called the "political paradigm of society". And that the elaboration of substantial citizenship, still in Touraine's terms, was inscribed in a later frame, that of the "economic-social paradigm".⁷² In both cases - in a period roughly situated between the end of the 18th and 20th centuries - the role of the State supplanted that of Society.

But the technical transformations of production, which replaced, in large quantities, live work with automation (in all sectors of the economy, and not only in industrial areas), combined with the breakdown of socialism, the expansion of communication and computer control and neoliberal globalization caused the power relations to change, altering the characteristics of previous models. In such a way, that the pole of civil society (understood as the immediate realm of needs, in the manner of Hegel) acquired a new weight and autonomy.

Among the most evident aspects of globalization is, as is common knowledge, the deregulation or lack of protection of the legal framework that the State had previously guaranteed to the world of work and, through it, to the social paradigm. The new logic imposed itself, above all, as economic, supplanting political projects and actions or subjecting them, predominantly, to the objectives of production. An economy, even, no longer exercised from a national

⁷² *A New Paradigm*, portuguese version, Ed. Vozes, 2006.

point of view. That is, if capitalism already had tendencies inherent to globalization, the bonds with a country's internal relations have become even looser, which also reveals itself in the lack of commitment to its workers, thought and treated no longer as a class or necessarily subjects political (*populo*, in the Spinozian language), but as individuals or consumers (only *vulgus*). The precariousness of the work system was imposed worldwide, but much more acutely in poor, underdeveloped or “emerging” countries. It is then possible to claim, not without foundation, that *the trivialization of social injustice*⁷³ has become the currency, since structural unemployment, the easing of rules and the competition of work contaminate, with its deleterious influences, social and existential conditions. Consequently, at a time when old social and labor rights are weakened or even excluded, that labor income is reduced (compared to previous situations), that unemployment and job insecurity are growing remarkably (so-called “macjobs”), what new prerogatives can then be envisioned and demanded?

Having lost its political importance, the working class - previously seen as a category of universal tendency - has been progressively abandoned in favor of special communities, which, in turn, claim rights now called cultural, which also constitute the content of *multiculturalism*.⁷⁴ We are talking here, of course, about ethnic groups and national minorities, migrants, religious communities, sexual behaviors and choices and affirmative action. The latter implies the protectionist and compensatory frameworks that, by law, induce the

⁷³ Christophe Dejours, “The trivialization of social Injustice” (*A Banalização da injustiça social*), portuguese version, Ed. Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1999.

⁷⁴ Together with Touraine, Michel Wieviorka gives as causes of the phenomenon the transformations of the Fordist-taylorist model of production and the concomitant weakening of the working class. See *Une société fragmentée? Le Multiculturalisme en débat*, La Découverte, Paris, 1996

access of ethnic and minority communities to higher education courses and the inclusion of curricular subjects that are both formal and specific (ethnic or feminist studies, for example), or still for jobs, public or private.

As for the feminist movement, whose roots can be interviews already in the Enlightenment, its thinking and demands are inscribed in the eminently universalist tradition of civil, political and economic equalites.

The recent history of multiculturalism had, if not its beginning, at least a major boost in the American civil rights movement of the 1960s, in the struggle against racial segregation, then legally permitted in the country, and in equally contemporary demands of feminism. In the wake of both, the movement of Native Americans arose, demanding compensation for the genocide suffered and the possibility of reproducing traditional ways of life and, shortly afterwards, that of Hispanics, in search of language recognition and access to financial resources.

In addition to the aforementioned socioeconomic aspects, the end of real socialism in Eastern Europe also contributed to the left's thinking being weakened to the point of becoming incapable of global opposition to the neoliberal ideological project. Finally, the migratory movement from third world countries and towards rich countries, which intensified in the last decades of the 20th century (from south to north, from east to west), stimulated by the new and more difficult conditions of survival, contributed powerfully to the establishment and debate about the phenomenon.

At the outset, it should be made clear that “cultural rights cannot be considered as an extension of political rights, inasmuch as they must be granted to all citizens, whereas cultural rights, by definition,

protect determined populations. ... It is here, in fact, no longer the right to be like the other, but the right to be another. If cultural rights have more mobilizing force than others, it is because they are more concrete and concern a specific population ... But their claim also exposes great dangers, those to which all particularities expose people: in a word, threaten the very principle of living together”.⁷⁵

If the abolition of innate privileges and the impartial application of laws are part of the democratic idea, the transition from political and social to cultural rights corresponds, in a way, to a legal particularization. Or even, in words like those of Andrea Semprini, even though he is a cautious supporter of multiculturalism: “the controversies are only peripherally related to the traditional domain of the politician and bring the debate closer to a daily talk show: abortion, health care, prison system , affirmative action, family values, single mothers, homosexuals in the armed forces, marriage of homosexuals ... This phenomenon, without being specifically American, points to a much deeper crisis of the Political in relation to the Economic or Cultural”.⁷⁶

Now, in democracy, “no individual transfers his natural right to another, to the point that the latter never needs to consult him again. He transfers it to the totality of the collective of which he is a part; the individuals thus remain all the same, as in the state of nature”.⁷⁷ In contrast, when an ethnic or social movement stipulates the conquest of a cultural right, it aims at self-realization or being recognized as a subject differentiated by what one is in particular (being black, indigenous, mestizo, immigrant, Islamic, umbandist, homosexual

⁷⁵ Alain Touraine, op. Cit.

⁷⁶ *Multiculturalism*, portuguese version, Edusc, 1999.

⁷⁷ Spinoza, *Traité Théologico-Politique*, Garnier, Flammarion, 1965.

etc), and not by a common attribute, that of being a citizen or worker. In other words, a *cultural right asserts itself as a distinction*, even when it is pronounced in the name of equality or the universal.

When understood and claimed only as an *anthropological prerogative*, cultural law follows the trend of what is the greatest of modernity's values - individualism. Subjective instances - such as interiority, the truth relative to a context or group, and the conquest of personal well-being - precede or are little related to social demands and to the traditionally political universe. In this new socio-cultural model of claims, the political life of the individual or group is done in a fragmented way, depending on particular cultural contexts (ethnic, religious, sexual, specific interests, lateral references) and also on a much more ephemeral dynamic. The difficulty, however, is to know whether one and the other (cultural law and individualism) really lead to emancipation in society or whether, again, they subject men to the coercion of the biological cycle or, what comes of it, whether in the name of subjectivities and particularisms they keep them bound to the repetitive demands of nature.

As the perspective of cultural rights or multiculturalism is strongly linked to the notions of “difference and identity”, which are very dear to postmodernism, more than suspicious, it is opposed to the idea of “universals” and to the dialectical belief that differences and contradictions generate syntheses that are both superior and unifying (in the Hegelian or Marxist way). On the one hand, the multiculturalist assertion stands in favor of the “plurality of discourses”, “of multiple voices”, “in defense of minorities and the excluded” and facing the traditional “maîtres à penser” (in Foucault's jargon, those who conceive the great syntheses and, with them, dictate ways of thinking and acting).

At the same time, therefore, cultural law is based on the ideas of *dialogism and recognition*. This means that the constructions of subjectivity and the particular identity (of a self) occur, necessarily, within a defined group. They are, therefore, the result of an individual's permanent interactions with linguistic, cognitive, cultural, affective and bodily structures and social coexistence with other members of the community. Consequently, subjectivity is consolidated in the feeling and awareness of a belonging, a welcoming or, in short, an identity recognition in a relatively limited socio-cultural and / or geographical environment.

Agreeing with this understanding, which has nothing new, as it stems from Aristotle's age-old and unquestionable claim, that man is *zoon legon ekon*, it remains to be asked: 1) whether this group needs to be invariable and specifically one, of characters ethnic, geographical, linguistic, religious, social or cultural, which, in the end, would greatly limit the possibility of human experience and knowledge; 2) if the emphasis on distinction, so experienced throughout history, does not end up reinforcing irreducible attitudes, attached identities, the atomization of society or the relativization of truths, which come to depend on interests, mentalities and convictions exclusive to groups social or religious. This second aspect or possibility is reiterated by Giovanni Sartori, for whom cultural rights play the role of a *factory of diversities* - one that obsessively highlights differences and converts them into reasons for separation or rebellion: "multiculturalism leads to Bosnia and balkanization",⁷⁸ to cite a more recent example of these times.

⁷⁸ *Pluralismo, multiculturalismo e estranei. Saggio sulla società multietnica*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2000.

This curious and paradoxical aspect of recent cultural claims is the fact that a large part of its defenders and proselytes proclaim themselves “left-wing” or judge themselves, albeit in an epigonic way, belonging to the Enlightenment-socialist tradition. Such a contradiction also appeared in the eyes of Christopher Lasch and is thus explained in their *Mass Culture Reconsidered*: “Like Veblen and Dewey, Benjamin maintains that modern technology, by its very nature, separates the mass from its superstitions and their traditional environments, thus facilitating the constitution of an iconoclastic, scientific and critical spirit ... Contrary to American sociologists, specialists in modernization, Benjamin knew very well that the immediate effect of mass communication is to increase the 'factitious attraction of goods', but insisted on the fact that, in the long run, uprooting would create the conditions for a new kind of fraternity ... The Marxist theory of technology, and that of mass communication technology in particular, *shares with liberal sociology the idea that ethnic ties, kinship networks, religious beliefs and other forms of particularism suffocate the possibility of an autonomous thought and preserve the masses in passivity or inertia*” (emphasis added).⁷⁹

If cultural rights are intended, at best, to conquer prerogatives or to create the conditions for a group or community to become a social actor, they can only avoid conflicts and the establishment of new inequalities if they are preceded or subordinated to the universal principle of citizenship, that in which the laws are valid for all, indistinctly, and for which personal freedom and public responsibility are balanced. Returning to Touraine (opus cited), the author says: “... the new social movements, undoubtedly very diverse, all demand the

⁷⁹ *Culture de masse ou culture populaire?*, french version, Climats, 2001.

recognition of a new type of rights, the cultural rights; ... these demands are new and are found neither in industrial society nor in pre-industrial societies; ... cultural rights, like social rights before them, can become anti-democratic, authoritarian or even totalitarian instruments if they are not closely linked to political rights, which are universalist, and if they find no place within the social organization and, particularly, the system of distribution of resources ... it is necessary to give another meaning to the words recognition and realization of oneself. Recognition of the other is neither mutual understanding nor a loving relationship. It consists in seeing the construction of the subject act in the other, just as we feel it act in ourselves. This construction is realized by the elaboration of the universal, from a particular social or cultural experience".

In her essay *Ethics, a fundamental value*,⁸⁰ Amelia Valcárcel recalls that Plato had attributed Athenian attachment to universalist and symmetrical ideas to equality of birth, to the feeling of the clan, to a "political" condition, in this case with a simpler meaning, that of coming from and living in the same polis (city-community). However, she continues, "the facts prove the opposite: in the place to which many different converge, only universal and egalitarian laws allow coexistence. So it was with the pax romana, and so the current democracy is presented... Certain voices are currently raised against such pretension: those of some of the colonized, and several others, also among us. Such universality is brutal, they told us. It erases differences to which everyone is entitled. It unifies ways of life, without increasing their quality. It is a compressor roll applied to the fragile, to avoid the effort of understanding and respecting them. The

⁸⁰ *Ética e Cultura* (Ethics and Culture), portuguese version, Sesc/ Ed. Perspectiva, 2004.

universalizing North is aggressive. It calls its customs and manias universal. It plunders the South in a thousand ways. It devours its raw materials, exports its own vices and illnesses, destroys the moral fabric of others and offers as an alternative its compulsive consumerism, which others neither desire nor can satisfy. We are, at last, a bad example. And since we support ourselves, to do all this, in our good and universal feelings, we are cynical... I would be willing to consider some of these ideas if we had been the only inventors of money; if we were the only ones to have bought and sold things and men. I am more likely to think, however, that this is a universal human capacity... our current universalism... is relatively evaluated and authenticated. The only objection that can be made to it is that we have evaluated and authenticated it, that is, that such universalism is only and only a particular trait of our social structure, characteristic of 'northern' societies, neither approved nor requested by others. In saying it, we close the question, because of the two: if we say it, it becomes an example of divergence that does not combat, but rather proves the consistency of the model; if they say it (whoever it is, outside of us), in that case they put a divergence that fits our model, but not theirs, that is, they fall into a paradox asking for attention to something to which they are not willing to give attention".

Already in the 18th century, in pursuing a universal ethical and political condition, above endless religious questions, Diderot said in his *Encyclopaedia*, in the Irreligious entry: "One is irreligious only in the society of which one is a member; it is certain that no crime will be committed in Paris against a Muhammadan for his contempt of the law of Mohammed, as well as against a Christian in Constantinople for his neglect of his cult. The same does not happen with moral principles; they are the same everywhere. Their disregard is and will

be reprehensible in all regions and in all times. People are divided into different cults, religious or irreligious, according to the place on the surface of the Earth to which they transport or inhabit; morals are the same everywhere”.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that, as a particular norm, cultural law falls short of the proper political sphere or classically public instance. For this reason, multiculturalism is confined to the limits of civil society and accompanies, without being aware of it, the vogue of socioeconomic liberalism, characteristic of today's times. For this, it is above all in the private sphere that the solutions to problems and the resolution of conflicts should preferably be found.