Teacher's imaginative elaborations on adolescence: a Winnicottian reading

Elaborações imaginativas de professores sobre adolescência: uma leitura Winnicottiana

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Abstract

Adolescents in situations of social vulnerability demand a type of care, from parents, teachers, and society, that protects them from the additional risks to which they are exposed, without compromising the development of their autonomy. This qualitative study aimed to investigate the imaginative elaborations of 30 teachers about adolescence using an Interactive Narrative approach as an investigative resource. The narrative material was analyzed interpretively, searching for the affective-emotional senses underlying the elaborations of the participants, resulting in the following fields of meaning: "Do not turn adolescence into rocket science" and "Adolescence: a sign of danger". In addition to the pedagogical issues, the participants expressed difficulty in dealing with issues that are specific to the adolescent's emotional development, oscillating between stereotyped conceptions and an empathic posture in the face of adolescent immaturity. It is concluded that teachers experience ambivalent feelings towards adolescents, assuming either an authoritarian or a patronizing posture, understanding adolescent conflict as natural at this development stage.

Keywords: Adolescence; Family; Psychology; Social vulnerability.

Resumo

O adolescente em situação de vulnerabilidade social demanda dos pais, professores e da sociedade um cuidado que o proteja dos riscos adicionais aos quais está exposto, sem que o desenvolvimento de sua autonomia seja comprometido. Este estudo qualitativo teve como objetivo investigar elaborações imaginativas de 30 professores sobre a adolescência, utilizando a Narrativa Interativa como recurso investigativo. O material narrativo foi analisado interpretativamente em busca dos sentidos afetivo-emocionais subjacentes às elaborações dos participantes, resultando nos campos de sentido: "Não façam da adolescência um bicho de sete cabeças" e "Adolescência: sinal de perigo". Para além das questões pedagógicas, os participantes manifestaram dificuldade para lidar com questões próprias ao desenvolvimento emocional do adolescente, oscilando entre concepções estereotipadas e uma postura empática diante da imaturidade que é própria da idade. Conclui-se que os professores vivenciam sentimentos ambivalentes em relação aos alunos, assumindo desde uma postura autoritária até aceitação do conflito adolescente como natural nessa etapa do desenvolvimento

Palavras-chave: *Adolescência; Família; Psicologia; Vulnerabilidade social.*

Adolescents are historical and social subjects, as are their vulnerabilities. These emerge from the weakening of the bonds of belonging, broken families and/or social violence, an early insertion in the labor market, and many other ways that expose the adolescent, in addition to the high expectations from family members, teachers, and society to become adult and autonomous as soon as possible (Eisenstein, 2005).

The school, as well as the family, is recognized as a protection and personal development factor for adolescents. However, this protection is compromised by the high expectations regarding the student's performance and the teachers' disbelief regarding the possibility of changing students' behavior. Thus, teachers transmit a sense of lack of empathy and confidence in relation to the student's ideas, desires, and behaviors (Fonseca, Sena, Santos, Dias, & Costa, 2013).

The lack of quality education and poverty levels, as well as the lack of professional opportunities and unemployment, directly or indirectly affect the adolescent's life trajectory, who are faced, in certain situations, with the 'obligation' to enter the labor market early and/or drug trafficking (Fonseca et al., 2013; Torossian, Ribeiro, Silva, & Barbosa, 2017). In addition, according to Pires, Sarmento, and Drummond (2018), the need to get their own income and the disbelief that it is possible to improve one's life through studies favors school dropout rates and increases the risk of adolescents being involved in crimes and offenses, in the illusion of asserting themselves as individuals.

On the other hand, Olimpio and Moreira (2015) problematize the teacher-student relationship itself, always loaded with expectations and frustrations previously directed at parental figures, in terms of the expanding intergenerational gap. The adolescence of teachers is far from the experience of the contemporary youth, going through social networks and virtual worlds that do not always reflect the concrete reality of those who experience poverty, prejudice, parental and social neglect, the lack of future perspective in an increasingly individualistic and competitive world.

However, we can assume that, if the generational and experiential distance of the teacher in relation to the experiences of the adolescent may be the basis of the impossible dialogue that we have observed in the classroom, it is also possible that the identification of the dramas experienced by teachers in their daily lives and those experienced by students can either bring them closer to a deeper understanding of what it is like to be an adolescent today or distance them in their adult refuge.

For these reasons, this study aimed to investigate the imaginative elaborations of a group of teachers about adolescents and the process of adolescence, insofar as the collective imaginary (Giust-Deprairies, 2005) of teachers, woven into the intersubjectivity of life, feeds their conduct. From this, it will be possible

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to rethink educational and therapeutic actions that help teachers to face so many challenges and allow them to preserve the potential of the graduating student, which will not happen without strengthening teachers themselves, who often share the same adversities as students.

Method

Participants

Thirty teachers from two public schools in a city within the state of São Paulo participated in this study, four men (only one of them was a father) and 26 women (16 mothers); aged 24 to 70 years. At the first school, the 13 participants worked full time (from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm), teaching adolescents aged 11 to 14. In the second school, the 17 participating teachers worked in two shifts and taught, in the morning, High School students aged 15 to 18 and, in the afternoon, Middle School adolescents aged 11 to 14. Both schools were located on the outskirts of the municipality where the research was carried out, in a territory of social precariousness and vulnerability.

Instrument

For data collection, which took place in the framework of a group interview, we used the Interactive Narrative (IN) procedure, which was created by Granato and Aiello-Vaisberg (2016) as a resource for psychoanalytic investigation, which aims to access the emotional experience of the participants in relation to a certain theme, problem, or situation. Based on the assumption that the narratives we elaborate throughout life aim not only at communication per se, but at the very elaboration of living (Granato, Russo, & Aiello-Vaisberg, 2009), we proposed the narrative as an invitation for the participant to live an experience, and did not explain it, giving new meanings to their experiences (Benjamin, 1936/1996).

The IN procedure consisted of a fictional story previously elaborated by the researcher and discussed with her research group, in order to adapt its content, language, and style to the object of study and the participant's context. As is usual in the construction of an IN, the plot is interrupted at a certain moment, so that the participants can complete it spontaneously and towards an outcome (Granato & Aiello-Vaisberg, 2013). In the case of this study, the researcher, her advisor, her co-advisor, and her research groups participated in this process. It is worth remembering that all IN go through different versions until they are considered good enough as a means of accessing the dramatic context that is intended to be investigated.

The idea of using an IN as an investigative resource aimed to privilege the dialogic characteristic of the meeting between researchers and participants, giving them the opportunity to identify with the characters and the conflicts conveyed by the narrative. In a protected and playful way, once it moves through the fictional field, the IN invites the participant to create an outcome for the situation presented by the researcher (Granato & Aiello-Vaisberg, 2016; Granato, Corbett, & Aiello-Vaisberg, 2011).

In order to explore the teachers' imaginary on adolescents and the process of adolescence, we opted for a conflict of the adolescents' daily lives, which resulted in the following story:

Gabriel has just moved into the neighborhood and is already attending the new school where he starts making friends. As his parents work all day long, Gabriel is on his own: he goes to school in the morning, does his homework and plays soccer with his neighbors in the afternoon. Rosemeire and Antônio never had a single problem with their son, who was always obedient and dedicated to his studies, but, since he is becoming an adolescent, they think it is always good to "keep an eye" on him.

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On a rainy day, Rosemeire left work earlier due to a blackout and you can only imagine her surprise when, getting home, she did not find Gabriel anywhere. She called Paulo and Mariana, her son's new classmates, but they did not know anything. Two hours later Gabriel arrives and explains to the distressed mother that he was walking in the park with friends from the neighborhood. Rosemeire calms down but finds it suspicious. She talks to her husband who says: "This is a kid thing, Rose. You don't need to worry."

The following week, Gabriel asks to go to a party on Saturday with friends from school. His parents give him permission, as long as he doesn't come back late. The son agrees and then sends a WhatsApp message confirm his presence at the party. Rosemeire knows that it is important for her son to have friends, but she is worried because she thinks her son is hiding something. No sooner said than done! On Saturday night, Rosemeire and Antônio ended up falling asleep and only realized that their son had not returned home on Sunday morning.

They got so desperate! They called everyone they knew, and nobody knew Gabriel's whereabouts. Rosemeire decided to go to the church to find out if anyone had seen her son and Antônio went looking for the kid in the neighborhood, as he was already overly concerned. At the church, Rosemeire did not hear anything about her son, but she got the cell phone number of a teacher from Gabriel's school who seems to be very close to the students. After talking to the teacher, Rosemeire calls her husband: Antônio, I'm getting scared! The teacher said that he has not been doing his homework and has been missing classes lately. Did you find out anything? What should we do, Antônio? Where are you?

Procedures

The application of the IN was carried out in the framework of two group interviews, one in each school, during the collective pedagogical working hours, having been previously scheduled with the school coordinators.

The IN procedure was distributed to teachers on a printed sheet so that they could follow the reading aloud by the responsible researcher, and then they were invited to complete it spontaneously, in written form. A student from the Psychology course followed the entire procedure, being responsible for the transcription and recording of the participants' behavior and dialogue. After completion, all IN papers were collected and kept in an envelope to preserve teachers' anonymity. Then, the researcher invited the group of teachers to reflect on that shared experience, expressing feelings and emotions mobilized by the drama presented by the IN or any other subject they wanted to discuss. The researcher's welcoming and attentive listening posture allowed participants to have a free and fluid conversation, allowing for expressive narrative material whose interpretation resulted in the setting of affective-emotional senses. And to prevent the identification of the participants in this study, we used fictitious names.

In a first stage of analysis of the narrative material produced, the researcher analyzed the meanings identified in each of the participants' IN to, in a second stage, analyze them as an expression of the collective of teachers with the research group of this study, in order to determine their understanding of the studied phenomenon.

The fields of this study are configurations of affective-emotional meanings that are organized around a given experience, exposing their individual and collective aspects, based on the imaginative elaborations of the research participants (Granato & Aiello-Vaisberg, 2016). Each field is named in order to communicate the dramatic meaning of the experience of one or more participants, since the individual is always produced in conjunction with the collective, according to the conception of a socially constituted person (Bleger, 1984).

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These fields were discussed in the light of Winnicott's theorizing on a good enough environment and antisocial tendencies, processes of integrating the Self within the precariousness to which children and adolescents were exposed during the Second World War (Abram, 2000).

The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the *Faculdade de Ciências Médicas da Unicamp* (FCM-UNICAMP, University of Campinas School of Medical Sciences) on 12/05/2016 (Process nº 1.850.337) and the participants were informed about the objectives and methods of the study and how they would participate, signing the Informed Consent Form.

Understanding that the researcher is also a participatory and active agent in the studied universe, the psychoanalytic listening of the responsible researcher permeated the elaboration of the IN, the associative way in which records were made, and the posture with which the researcher welcomed the participants, since the transferential field is not restricted to the analytical setting (Hermann, 2007). This recognition of the activation of the transferential field during the meetings provided the researcher with reflections on her own fears, anxieties, and expectations, challenging herself regarding her social roles as daughter, woman, mother, and professor to understand the meanings communicated by the participating teachers.

This same stance permeated the entire process of analyzing the narrative material, allowing the meanings underlying the manifest content of the participants' reports to be heard, in order to differentiate them from the theories and personal beliefs with which every researcher enters his or her field of study. This movement of opening to the new was only made possible by the recognition of its own implication in the interpretation of senses, which, in turn, was repeatedly discussed and validated by the other authors of this study.

Results and Discussion

The interpretative analysis of the material produced by the study participants resulted in two fields of affective-emotional meanings: "Do not turn adolescence into rocket science" and "Adolescence: a sign of danger".

Field 1 – "Do not turn adolescence into rocket science"

The "Do not turn adolescence into rocket science" field brings together the productions of teachers that make reference to the adolescent's way of being, their desires, experiments, discoveries, reactions, and their way of manifesting themselves against the demands of reality. The statement that names the field rescues the adolescent who is usually seen as impulsive, irresponsible and immature, to replace him or her as a person who is looking for new places of belonging, new interests and conquests on the way to his or her autonomy. Adolescence is a transition phase whose transformations take place in the physical, psychological, and social spheres, enabling young people to manage a series of choices that, in their majority, result in family conflicts, especially parental ones (Araújo, 2014; Brasil, Almeida, Amparo, & Pereira, 2015), which, in turn, mark the adolescent's subjectivation process, a phase that must be monitored and undergo parental intervention, when necessary (Stortelder & Ploegmakers-Burg, 2010).

In their IN, the teachers refer to adolescence as a phase in which the development and constitution of a subject are moving towards the choice of new challenges and delusions with the adult world. According to Winnicott (1986/1999), the immaturity of adolescents, which would allow them to creatively experiment, in other words, to express their spontaneous gesture in the expectation of being welcomed by the adult world, usually provokes feelings of intolerance and powerlessness in adults, compromising the survival of authority figures in this period of emotional turmoil.

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This coping posture in their search for existence can be expressed in the context of sexuality, which was mentioned by the participants, as seen in the IN of teacher Tânia, 31 years old:

> *Rosemeire and the father decide to look at their son's computer and see if they find out where Gabriel is. When they look at the child's social media (Facebook), they discover through the chat window that Gabriel has a girlfriend. And the reason he's been missing lately is that, since the girl studies in another period, he's been missing school to meet her[...] he didn't get home on time that night because, after the party, he decides to go with his girlfriend to another party, where he didn't get cellphone reception and couldn't leave the party (because he depended on taking a ride with someone else).*

Let us now see what Gabriela, 45, wrote: *"He's here, last night they went to a club and stayed until dawn, dancing and having fun; as it was pouring down, he decided to sleep right here [...] and he explained that he had been dating a girl, Marília, and he was in love".*

Although teachers Gabriela and Tânia allude to the adolescent's irresponsibility and immaturity, they seem to be associated with the emergence of sexuality, as if it justified the adolescent's irresponsible conduct and, in a certain way, inserted it within what is expected for this stage of life. Thus, Gabriela and Tânia seem to communicate that parents and teachers should not worry so much since adolescence is not "rocket science".

In her IN, teacher Renata, 50, draws attention to the adjustments that the development of children imposes on parents, in order to promote the same safe environment as before, but with adaptations that take into account the yearnings for freedom and autonomy by the adolescent. In addition, Renata emphasizes the nostalgia that affects parents as their children grow up: *"When they were children, living together was easier in relation to being together, today I miss that. But when we are together (few moments) it is very good, very affectionate, a lot of love. But I miss talking more, knowing more about their plans, their dreams".*

A good enough environment (Winnicott, 1965/1982) contributes to an adequate internalization of parental and authority figures, insofar as adolescents feel protected, safe, and able to dialogue with reality, in a free and authentic way. The reliability of the environment, which is manifested by its predictability and stability, as well as by offering emotional support, plays a decisive role in the adolescent's feeling of security and confidence.

However, the development of autonomy is gradual and follows the emotional development of the individual. Although it is punctuated by progressions and regressions, it will only be consolidated in a satisfactory family environment, a *sine qua non* condition for the development of the individual as a whole (Winnicott, 1986/1999).

In view of the challenges that families face today, despite their diversification and the inclusion of new forms of care, one of the most discussed issues today is the issue of the limits that children and adolescents get. These limits, according to Winnicott (1984/2012), cause the greatest structuring effects on creativity, since creativity will only happen in a safe space where adolescents will be able to exercise their ability to think spontaneously, in addition to emotionally organizing themselves.

Over the past few decades, changes in family configurations attest to the transition from a patriarchal model, in which the family was large, coexisted in the same space, with the father as the sole provider and holder of the power of choice, for a nuclear family model. This change generated changes in the dynamics and hierarchy of the family, with a greater participation of women in decisions, their insertion in the labor market, and the sharing of children's education between spouses. As a result, children and adolescents were removed from other family figures, such as grandparents, uncles, godparents, and cousins (Dessen, 2010; Roudinesco, 2003). In addition, when both parents are inserted in the labor market, their emotional involvement with the children is further restricted, as can be seen in the IN of teacher Ágatha, 51 years old: "*The parents of a friend of Gabriel's said that they slept at Tiago's house and so they took his address and*

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ran over there. Tiago was an older boy, who led the group of friends. He already had a motorbike and his parents often left him alone on weekends, when they decided to travel".

Some alternatives that are presented today in the face of powerlessness are neighbors and friends, in a constant attempt to rescue the lost ties (Araújo, 2014). Tiago, in this case, can serve Gabriel as an alternative of reference in this process of identity construction, as the oldest and most independent of parental figures, he seems to be an intermediate figure – between adolescence and adulthood –, for a more empathetic and welcoming identification of the yearnings of an adolescent.

Despite the innate tendency to maturity (Winnicott, 1986/1999) that accompanies human beings since birth, for each individual to develop creativity, there needs to be a welcoming and active environment in order to facilitate and continue the integration process. For this creative living, which even involves adolescent aggression and transgression, the predictability of the environment becomes essential, making it reliable (Araújo, 2014), allowing the adolescent to trust in future relationships, as you can only be truly free if you have ever felt safe.

The school can constitute itself as a continuity of the home environment, offering itself as a predictable and restraining environment for its students, having clarity on the distinction of tasks, consistency in requirements, fairness and firmness in the application of the rules. As we could notice by the IN of this study, teachers delineate limits as necessary, but we remember these only work if they reflect the emotional support of the environment, in the face of ambivalences and concerns, protecting and supporting adolescents when they do not behave in a socially expected way.

 Just as educational institutions and health institutions have been called upon to intervene in this care, full-time school is already a part of the reality of many Brazilian families, where children and adolescents spend most of their day within the school walls (Faial et al., 2016; Wagner & Vieira, 2017).

Field 2 – "Adolescence: a sign of danger"

This field alludes to the participants' belief that adolescence always represents problems whose origin is attributed to the lack of affective involvement, dedication, and responsibility of parents. Most of the teachers' reports communicate the fear of the adult losing control over the adolescent, a situation in which the adolescent would move from being a simple interlocutor in relation to the other person, to a more questioning and active attitude towards transgressive behavior.

This naturalizing perspective of adolescent conduct is deeply rooted in a society and, consequently, a pedagogical community that, for the most part, blames parents and adolescents for the situation of vulnerability to which they are exposed, such as violence and the use of licit and illicit substances (Bock, 2007; Firbida & Facci, 2015).

In addition, teachers who deal with adolescents often realize that they know their students less than he would like to. The concerns of this phase disturb the teacher who has no answers to give, such as those related to romantic, sexual, and professional choices for example, thus leaving adolescents even more vulnerable to overcome their anguish and concerns (Olimpio & Moreira, 2015; Faria & Martins, 2016).

This type of blaming posture was observed in the IN of teacher Angela, 58 years old:

> *The great failure of parents was not to take their kids to school, not knowing who the new classmates are, even more because they are in a new place, believing a call or cell phone message, as it is not possible to know if they are really telling the truth about the place they are at.*

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While looking for new places of belonging and new social roles, adolescents expose themselves, differentiating from parental models in the construction of their subjectivity. The task of parents, teachers, and caregivers is to make themselves present by taking care and protecting so that the withdrawal of authority be gradual (Winnicott, 1984/2012).

The differentiation and individuation processes allow the baby to live the experience of omnipotence by having his needs readily met by the environment, represented, initially, by the maternal function. It is in this phase of the stage of absolute dependence, that the possibility of acting spontaneously and relating creatively to the world is inaugurated, which will be presented gradually to the individual and, therefore, safely. The basis for establishing trust in the other, for Winnicott (1984/2012), comes from the stability and predictability of the human environment that is offered to the baby through routine and care at the beginning of life. If individuals have satisfactory initial experiences, they move towards independence, albeit a relative one, and develop their ability to deal with the frustrations imposed by the environment (Winnicott, 1986/1999).

According to Winnicott (1986/1999), leaving the state of absolute dependence towards independence is the great journey that the human being needs to complete in order to become a subject. The quality of the primary mother-baby relationship is guaranteed when there is a father who provides sufficient support and security for this relationship to be good enough (Araújo, 2014). In this conception, still marked by the traditional family model, the father would have the role of breaking an alleged fusional mother-baby relationship, by intervening and imposing a necessary and significant limit for the identification process to unfold. However, we know that today, far from the family model to which Winnicott himself was exposed, we are witnessing an entire social debate around parental functions and the different family configurations that have emerged in contemporary times (Moraes & Granato, 2016). If we still articulate the issue of new parenting demands with the gender relations and social vulnerability in which the majority of the students in this study live, we will have a very different picture of a British middle class in the 1950s.

Teacher Samanta, 36, addresses in her IN, albeit subtly, the risk to which this student population is exposed:

> *A few hours later, they found their son, who said he had been at a friend's house. That he left the party and went to another one with this friend. What happened at these parties was omitted by the son, but they became aware of the importance of being more present in their son's life. They decided to pay more attention to his cell phone conversations, as well as taking him to and picking him up from parties and social events. Even so, they knew that it was not a guarantee that the child would not get involved with bad companies and drugs, so the dialogue became more frequent in the family's home.*

From the parents' perspective, Samanta mentions the difficulty, the surprise, and the feeling of powerlessness as part of the parental routine, which lead us to reflect on the fact that a good enough family environment is not a guarantee of success, since it is the "innate tendency towards integration and growth that produces health, and not environmental provision" (Winnicott, 1965/1982, p. 65). In this way, the parents presented in Samanta's IN seek to adapt to the maturational moment of the adolescent son, seeking new ways of caring and protecting.

The same parental function that gives adolescents the possibility to creatively relate and live is the one that provides the space for them to transgress, experiencing and transforming the learning they obtained in childhood (Araújo, 2014). Dias (2002) highlights that, if the family is able to support the individual, in its destructiveness and creativity, it becomes the place of reference and support for children and adolescents so that they can learn to "question the social code" (Araújo, 2014; Torossian, Ribeiro, Silva, & Barbosa, 2017), creating their own code, by updating children's learning and parental continence that contribute to social and cultural changes in a creative way.

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Teacher Janine, 49, portrays an adolescent who, despite violating the social code by drinking and vomiting, does not lose his parents as figures of care and guidance. His parents resist and survive the challenges that the son presents to them, showing his resilience and responsibilities:

> *Antônio continues to search and finds out that, at the party, Gabriel had drunk too much alcohol that he is now in the hospital, in the recovery room. He goes to the hospital, in the company of his mother, already determined to guide his son about the places where he goes and the consequences of his actions.*

However, teacher Tamires, 37, illustrated the gap that can open between parents and their adolescent son, who thus find themselves unable to exercise their parental function and become mere spectators of their child's transgressions: "*The father [...] did not find the son but discovers that the boy is seen daily with 'new colleagues' walking around the neighborhood and committing acts of vandalism. These 'kids' paint graffiti on houses, mistreat animals, and curse children and elderly people around the neighborhood*".

As in Tamires's IN, the transgression does not always occur in a creative and constructive way (Araújo, 2014), in the sense of creating new world references. On the contrary, when the rules could not be internalized from a personal appropriation of the adolescent, the transgression loses this character of breaking with the old and structuring the new to become a merely destructive act, since it denies the successes and achievements from the previous relational model.

The IN of teacher Jade, 70, alludes to another possibility of reading the same phenomenon, which refers to the fact that the transgression means a cry for help from the adolescent (Winnicott, 1984/2012), who thus expresses his hope to be rescued from a self-destructive movement:

> *When they arrive, they talk for a long time about what could be happening [...] if it was freedom without "surveillance" and both come to the conclusion that Gabriel had become an adolescent and they had not noticed it yet. They then decide to call the emergency rooms, hospitals in search of some information. After many attempts, in one of these places they obtain the information that a young man without any identification was admitted for having drunk too much alcohol and symptoms of narcotic use [...] they immediately go to the place and find out that this young man is Gabriel. At the same time, they felt a mix of joy and sadness. Firstly, their son, even in those conditions, was alive, and secondly, they took responsibility for the 'abandonment' of his education, at the home and school levels. "Every cloud has a silver lining", they thought, as there was still time to help Gabriel, and they believed that change was possible.*

Jade's IN stresses the ability to reorganize the family environment to meet the adolescent's cry for help, supporting him in his struggle to free himself from dependence on psychoactive substances and his involvement with trafficking.

Unlike Jade's IN, teacher Aurora, 56, suggests the risk of a repeat offense by the adolescent, which leads us to assume a failure in the constitution of a good and protective internal object. The absence of this integrating center of the self may have contributed to the abuse of psychoactive substances as a strategy to rescue the illusion and security of the home, lost in a context of social vulnerability. In this condition, we must also consider social precariousness as one of the factors that leads young people into trafficking as a solution to their problems:

> *Their son had 50 cocaine vials and was seen selling these on the school's sidewalk. Later, the principal said he was selling the drug during school break. After bursting into an outbreak of crying and fear, Rosemeire says goodbye to her son, handcuffed and taken to FEBEM (Brazilian youth detention center, known today as CASA) [...] After 13 years [...] Rosemeire waits for her son to leave prison, who has already served time for trafficking for the third time.*

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When the environment is not good enough in terms of reliability, the adolescent may lose contact with objects and with his ability to find them creatively. This can give rise to antisocial tendencies (Winnicott, 1984/2012), organized in the face of deprivation that occurs in the stage of relative dependency, when the environment's adaptation to the baby's needs occurs abruptly and unexpectedly. This deprivation of care interrupts creative living and causes adolescents to oppose society in general, which is held accountable for their situation, in their minds, and from whom they demand the return of their lost security and trust (Fulgêncio, 2016; Miura et al., 2018).

Although Winnicott (1984/2012) does not exempt adolescents from their responsibility for their actions, he believes that they cannot be penalized for their transgressions, nor feel destroyed, nor have the sensation of having destroyed the other with their attitudes, since adolescence is a stage of immaturity and adolescents cannot measure the consequences of their actions.

In view of the social vulnerability that a large part of Brazilian families lives in, we can assume that children and adolescents, in these conditions, more than being educated, may seek care, protection, limits, and guidance in school.

The individualism that characterizes Western society today and the weakening of families in a situation of social vulnerability, also being neglected by the State, makes adolescents, parents, and teachers mention their powerlessness when facing issues that go beyond their private space. Parents and teachers are no longer references for adolescents, and started to look for solutions, sometimes in authoritarianism, sometimes in permissiveness, unable to find an intermediate position between these extremes.

The family and society faced great challenges in the 20th century, such as the evolution of scientific knowledge and the change in the social position of women, which demanded adjustments. When women left their homes and entered the labor market, they exposed the helplessness of their families and demanded a greater participation of men in the education of their children (Andrade, Praun, & Benincasa, 2018; Cerezer & Outeiral, 2011). Today, the figure of a new father emerges (Moraes & Granato, 2016; Santos & Antúnez, 2016), whose promises of shared care have not been fulfilled, either because of the need for both parents to contribute to the family income, being away from home, either due to the difficulty of changing the mentality of a society that still distributes social roles according to sex, age, color, among other criteria.

Winnicott (1986/1999) points out that adolescents have moved to a rather awkward and dependent path towards adult life and that growing up depends not only on the inherited potential, but on the intertwining that occurs with the facilitating environment. If the family can still be used as a reference for care, this will happen more often throughout life. Otherwise, if it is no longer available, even to be put aside, it will be necessary to provide small social units to deal with this adolescent's development process. And it is in this context that schools are inserted, in the process of expanding their listening efforts and supporting what resonates from the family environment.

Complaints of psychological distress by teachers have been recurrent nowadays, given the complexity that the school context has become, in addition to the fact that schools are still guided by a discourse that is still aligned with the old idea of domesticating instincts and unique, static, and linear knowledge. In this scenario, parents and teachers are unable to perceive the adolescent as someone who struggles to feel real (Araújo, 2014).

On the other side is the adolescent who brings a new challenge to institutions and teachers, the challenge of demystifying the "ideal student", the one who gets to school motivated to the difficult task of studying and respecting school rules, but in a passive way. However, teachers are lost in the face of the novelty of the task, since teacher training does not support them to deconstruct this student model and develop new practices that are more in tune with the needs of this growing audience (Leite, Pessoa, Santos, Rocha, & Alberto, 2016; Masuyama & Rinaldi, 2017).

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Conclusion

In general, we can conclude that, although the group of participating teachers is able to identify the challenges that accompany adolescence, such as the emergence of sexuality, the new contours of aggression, the bonds with their peers, the necessary changes in parental care, and the possibility of transgression, they still feel that adolescents are distant to them. The adult's difficulty in dealing with what is new, presented by the adolescent, becomes a challenge, as it seems to leave everyone bewildered and feeling fragile, generating mistrust and disregard for the steps in the task of becoming an adult. If this panorama points to the multiple difficulties that adults will face in their daily dealings with adolescents, it is a fact that precarious living conditions, such as those delineating this territory where parents, adolescents, and teachers find themselves, amplify the youth's lack of communication and reception, which are needed to build a life project.

Thus, studies that investigate the relationships that are created around the teacher and student can contribute to the broadening of the understanding of this conflicting relational context that happens every day at school, in addition to enabling a dialectical movement that occurs between the teachers' conceptions and fantasies and the adolescent's emotional experience. Being able to rethink current pedagogical practices becomes urgent in the face of the problem that manifests itself at school, where family and social issues overlap with the learning process. The school also lacks social and political support so that its gaze can be broadened and reach the changes that plague society, thus sustaining these adolescents' dreams, desires, and hopes for better days, since teachers and schools are parts of this orientation and partnership process.

Contributors

T. K. C. T. AMARAL participated in the study design, data collection, data processing, analysis and interpretation, literature review, and article writing. E. F. SILVA participated in data collection and transcription of research material. T. M. M. GRANATO participated in the conception of the study, in the elaboration of the instrument used, data analysis and interpretation, and in the final revision of the version to be published. L. D. S. LI participated in the study design, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, relevant critical review of the study contents, and final approval of the version to be published.

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