

# 'KNOWLEDGE IS POWER' AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF POWER: JOSÉ VERÍSSIMO (1857-1916) BETWEEN 'MARGINALIZATION' AND EDUCATIONAL 'ENGAGEMENT' IN THE PROVINCE OF PARÁ (1881-1884)

'SABER É PODER' E O SABER DO PODER: JOSÉ VERÍSSIMO (1857-1916) ENTRE A 'MARGINALIZAÇÃO' E O 'ENGAJAMENTO' EDUCATIVO NA PROVÍNCIA DO PARÁ (1881-1884)

'CONOCER ES PODER' Y CONOCER PODER: JOSÉ VERÍSSIMO (1857-1916) ENTRE LA 'MARGINACIÓN' Y EL 'COMPROMISO' EDUCATIVO EN EL PROVINCIA DO PARÁ (1881-1884)

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes José Veríssimo's 'educational experience' associated with 'marginalization' and political 'engagement' in the province of Pará, Brazil. In the context of political polarization between imperial tradition and scientific politics, a competitive examination for the French chair at Liceu Paraense was held (1881), and the Instruction-Promoting Society of Pará (1883-1884) was founded. I consider that giving candidates failing scores was a way of marginalizing prestigious professional positions and evidences the 'decadence' of imperial institutions – aware of the 'knowledge of power' –, allowing engagement in the Society – promoting the idea that 'knowledge is power' –, by appropriating the political-cultural practices of the 1870 Generation as to questioning the conservative status quo in the Amazonian context.

**Keywords:** Amazon; generation 1870; scientific politics; public instruction.

**Resumo:** Este artigo analisa a 'experiência educativa' de José Veríssimo associada à 'marginalização' e ao 'engajamento' político na província do Pará. No contexto de polarização política entre tradição imperial e política científica, ocorreu o concurso para a cadeira de francês do Liceu Paraense (1881) e emergiu a Sociedade Paraense Promotora da Instrução (1883-1884). Considero que a desclassificação no concurso foi uma forma de marginalização das posições profissionais prestigiadas e constatação a respeito da 'decadência' das instituições imperiais – conhecendo o 'saber do poder' –, permitindo o engajamento na Sociedade – promovendo o 'saber é poder' –, ao se apropriar das práticas político-culturais da Geração 1870 de contestação do status quo saquarema no contexto amazônico.

**Palavras-chave:** Amazônia; geração 1870; política científica; instrução pública.

**Resumen:** Este artículo analiza la 'experiencia educativa' de José Veríssimo asociada con la 'marginación' y el 'compromiso' político en la Provincia de Pará. En el contexto de la polarización política entre la tradición imperial y la política científica, tuvo lugar la competencia por la cátedra francesa del Liceo Paraense (1881) y surgió la Sociedad Promotora de la Educación Paraense (1883-1884). Considero que la descalificación en el concurso fue una forma de marginar las prestigiosas posiciones profesionales y descubrir la decadencia de las instituciones imperiales – conocer el 'conocimiento del poder' –, permitir la participación en la Sociedad – promover el 'conocimiento es poder' –, mientras que apropiarse de las prácticas político-culturales de la Generación 1870 de impugnar el status quo saquarema en el contexto amazónico.

**Palabras clave:** Amazonia; generación 1870; política científica; instrucción pública.

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## INTRODUCTION

José Veríssimo was one of Pará's most representative intellectuals in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For his historical-anthropological pieces of work, *As populações indígenas e mestiças da Amazônia* [*Amazon's Indigenous and Mixed Populations*] (1886), and literary production, *Cenas da vida amazônica* (*Scenes of the Amazonian Life*) (1886), he was deemed an authorized erudite individual, a reputable interpreter, an 'Amazonian intellectual' who was reflecting on the modernization process in the province of Pará, between 1870 and 1880. From an educational point of view, he stood out for his pedagogical innovations carried out at Collegio Americano (1884-1890), which provided empirical material for him to write *A educação nacional* (*The National Education*) (1890), as well as credentials for his appointment as Public Instruction director of the Republican Provisional Government (1889-1891) (Moraes, 2018).

Veríssimo was born in Óbidos, west of Pará, Brazil, in 1857. He completed primary education in Belém and Manaus, and graduated high school at Colégio Pedro II. He started a Civil Engineer course at Escola Central (later called Politécnica), but quitted due to health-related reasons. In Belém, from 1877, he wrote for the newspapers *O Liberal do Pará*, *A Província do Pará*, *A República* and *Gazeta de Notícias*. Veríssimo founded *Revista Amazônica*, a journal dedicated to languages, arts and sciences in the region, between 1883 and 1884 (Prisco, 1937; Veríssimo, 1966).

The connection between José Veríssimo's social and educational thinking is assumed by studies that have problematized his intellectual journey in Pará. Whereas a historical-anthropological analysis evidenced the 'slaughter' of crossbreeds in Pará, educational proposals pondered possible solutions for the 'regeneration' of these mixed populations. These investigations highlight the 'innovative nature' of José Veríssimo's educational activity; his pieces of work pointed out the need for a 'national education' anchored on the civic feeling and on the national character; for this reason, this project ended up being associated with the new regime by promoting a 'republican education' (Araújo, 2010; Araújo & Prestes, 2007; Cavazotti, 2003; França, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2014; Tullio, 1996).

The manifestation of this pedagogical innovation is highlighted with the inclusion of history, geography and physical education as disciplines in Primary Education, as well as with concerns about feminine education at Collegio Americano (Silva, 2012). In the Brazilian national education project, the educational model of the United States took a place of reference, swinging between patriotism and Americanism (Bontempi Júnior, 2003). For introducing the master lines of the Brazilian educational debate, thus showing his pioneering spirit, José Veríssimo was added to the lineage of educators with perennial and model contributions to Brazilian education, being therefore considered a 'classic' (Alves,

2011). In any case, the common perspective of this historiography is to consider José Veríssimo's educational thought embodied and systematized in the publishing of *A educação nacional* (1890).

Taking into account these historiographical remarks, the present article aims to analyze two forgotten moments in José Veríssimo's educational activities in Pará, characterized by 'marginalization' and political 'engagement': the competitive examination for the French chair at Liceu Paraense (1881) and his participation as first secretary and lecturer of the Instruction-Promoting Society of Pará (1883-1884). I consider that such 'educational experiences' (Thompson, 1981, 1987) became José Veríssimo's first contacts with the political and educational debate, a trend deepened with the advent of Collegio Americano (starting with Veríssimo's direction, in 1884), enabling the accumulation of discussions and practical experience that would lead him to write *A educação nacional* (1890) and to his administrative role in the Public Instruction Board (1890-1891).

The dimensions of José Veríssimo's 'marginalization' and 'political engagement' were directly associated with him being a representative of the '1870 Generation' in Pará (Bezerra Neto, 1998; Figueiredo, 2008; Moraes, 2018). Angela Alonso's analytical proposal (2002) takes the '1870 Generation' as a political movement composed of diverse social extractions, whose mark of cohesion was 'political marginalization' in the context of the Second Reign (1840-1889), polarized between the forces of 'scientific politics' and the hosts of 'imperial tradition'.

The 'imperial tradition', derived from reflections by Brazilian scholars and from the romantic movement, faced the political turmoil of the First Reign (1822-1831) and Regency (1831-1840), forging a model of State, societal organization and national identity, established from a national experience, – of political centralization and slavery – that distanced itself while incorporating the 'repertoire' of European thinking – comprehending the conservative ideas of Guizot and Thiers's French Restoration, of Bossuet's divine right of kings, and of Chateaubriand and Lamartine's romanticism. This tradition was guided by three principles: 'the liberalism of the estates of the realm', which ensured freedom and citizenship to slave owners, legitimizing social hierarchy; 'hierarchical Catholicism', which guaranteed the legitimacy of royal power and embraced those excluded by liberalism, poor free men, women, children and slaves; and 'romantic Indianism', which erected a unique representation of a Brazilian nation, imagining a positive view of Portuguese colonization and creating a national identity that fitted the political institutions of the Empire (Alonso, 2002).

The 'scientific politics' groups, in their turn, exposed their 'reform theories' in the political debate. In this set, the new liberals, with Joaquim Nabuco and his book *O abolicionismo* (*The Abolitionism*) as representative, would criticize the colonial heritage in Brazil's socioeconomic formation, at the same time that

abolitionist positivists, represented by Miguel Lemos and Teixeira Mendes, established a positivist interpretation of the Brazilian formation. Both proposed a 'social reform', in which the first measure would be the abolition of slavery. For their part, the republican liberals, responsible for the Republican Manifesto, led by Quintino Bocaiúva, the positivist federalists from Rio Grande do Sul, represented by Julio de Castilhos and Assis Brasil, and the scientific federalists from São Paulo, such as Pereira Barreto and Alberto Salles, addressed the matter of provincial autonomy and the formation of the National state, demanding a 'political reform' that would implement federation as a form of government (Alonso, 2002).

The political-intellectual movement of the '1870 Generation' was marginalized from the main imperial institutions – university seats, parliament chairs and party leaderships – and ended up betting its engagement on thematic campaigns, on short-term associations (societies, clubs, associations, etc.), on demonstrations, on rallies, on feasts. Contesting groups prepared their means of political organization on the margins of imperial institutions, within civil society: through 'political-cultural practices' of mobilization represented by conferences, meetings, acting on holidays and commemorative dates. Meetings were public events that happened in England and that, when appropriated by the Brazilian '1870 generation' movement, interconnected with other forms of protest in the West and reframed the Brazilian political-cultural tradition (Alonso, 2002).

In this context of political polarization between the 'imperial tradition' and the 'scientific politics' of the 1880s, the competitive examination for the French chair at Liceu Paraense was held, and the Instruction-Promoting Society of Pará was founded. In light of such facts, I point out that giving candidates failing scores was a form of 'marginalizing' prestigious professional positions and evidenced the 'decadence' of imperial institutions – aware of the 'knowledge of power' –, allowing 'engagement' in the Society, shaping the idea that 'knowledge is power', by appropriating the 'political-cultural practices' of the 1870 generation (meetings and conferences) that questioned the conservative status quo in the province, especially 'ultramontane' Catholics.

On a quiet Thursday, May 10, 1883, in the footer of the second page of *O Liberal do Pará*, in the 'Annuncios' section ('Announcements'), a brief note written by the first secretary, José Veríssimo, informed Pará society about the inauguration of the Instruction-Promoting Society of Pará: "The order of the day is: 1st - Permanent board taking office. 2nd - Speech by Mr. President, Counselor Tito Franco de Almeida" (*O Liberal do Pará*, 1883a, p. 2).

The following Sunday, May 13, the opening meeting of the Society would take place, at 10:00, in the hall of Pará Assembly. In the 'Noticiario' section ('News'), a writer from *O Liberal do Pará* echoed the event: "We are glad to see the spirit of association develop in the sense of spreading knowledge, of 'disseminating

instruction’, this great lever and solid base to all progress” (O Liberal do Pará, 1883b, p. 3, our emphasis). In it, the sincerest wishes for the future of this ‘useful institution’ were expressed, and so were promises of a frank and determined support to the initiative.

At the inauguration act, the ‘Noticiario’ section introduced the sworn-in executive committee: president, counselor Tito Franco de Almeida; 1st vice-president, Dr. Demetrio Bezerra; 2nd vice-president, Dr. José Paes de Carvalho; 1st secretary, José Veríssimo; 2nd secretary, Marcellino A. L. Barata; treasurer, Ludovico Paiva; attorney, Rodrigo Salles. The news ended with a clarification and an invitation: conferences would take place on Sundays, and the first to take the stand would be the Portuguese physician Dr. Domingos J. B. D’Almeida – “Greeting the society that promotes instruction, we invite the public, especially the distinguished families of this capital, to attend” (O Liberal do Pará, 1883b, p. 3).

In addition to the Opening Speech by counselor Tito Franco de Almeida, given at the foundation of the Society, in 1883, three conferences were held in the hall of Grêmio Literário Português. The first one took place between May and June – *O método intuitivo Froebel para a educação da primeira infância (Froebel’s Intuitive Method for Early Childhood Education)*, by Domingos J. B. de Almeida. The second one happened in June – *A mãe de família (Family Woman)*, by Counselor Tito Franco de Almeida. The last conference was held in July – *O movimento intelectual brasileiro nos últimos dez annos (The Brazilian Intellectual Movement in the Last Ten Years)*, by José Veríssimo. The opening speech and the three conferences were published in *Revista Amazonica*. The Society’s activities were carried out between 1883 and 1884.

However, before the advent of the Society, José Veríssimo had participated in a competitive examination for the French teacher position at Liceu Paraense, on August 11, 1881. The events following said examination represented his ‘first controversy’ associated with educational issues, the ascertainment of which enlivened the August pages of the newspapers *Gazeta de Notícias* and *O Liberal do Pará*.

### **‘KNOWLEDGE OF POWER’: THE ‘CASE’ OF THE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION FOR THE FRENCH CHAIR AT LICEU PARAENSE**

Through hearsay and posts on newspaper columns, it was rumored that there was favoritism in the examination, since the chair had been chosen beforehand in favor of the attaché of the secretariat of the provincial presidency, Dr. João Antônio Luiz Coelho, who passed the tests and was appointed for the position (*Gazeta de Notícias*, 1881f).

On August 13, 1881, the ‘Asumptos do dia’ section (‘Topics of the day’) in *Gazeta de Notícias* exposed the rumor: the vote of the teaching staff at Liceu

Paraense, responsible for the French competitive examination, was “[...] ‘devoid of passion’, and, while harming the gentlemen who were victims of injustice, did not undermine the interests of public instruction any less” (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881c, p. 2, our emphasis).

Just as in the competitive examinations held for the Latin and German chairs, the section then informed that the candidates in the French competitive examination should not be left out, since they passed the test: “The two gentlemen, in all fairness, fully approved in the competitive examination the day before yesterday, should not be left out, and the same applies to Mr. ‘José Veríssimo’ and Mr. Pinto Marques” (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881c, p. 2, our emphasis).

The text in the section detailed the rumor: this result was due to “The ease with which ‘politicking’ intervenes in teaching [...]”, considering that “[...] the ill-disposed individuals that left them out ‘failed to acknowledge their merit’ while holding on to ‘opinions’ [...]”, even though the latter, the ‘opinions’, “were not what the competitive examination consisted of, but were announced with much anticipation”. The chair was already promised, the section guaranteed again: “It has been said that the ‘chair was promised’, that it was someone’s already, and it is quite possible, in view of the precedents, that the faculty’s vote only symbolizes the ratification of said ‘promise’”. (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881c, p. 2, our emphasis).

At the end of the section, the writer resented that the teaching staff at Liceu Paraense, for deviating from the practice of justice and duty, only “Harmed themselves by harming their opponents [...]”; proving “[...] to have all the attributes for the ‘trickeries of our politicking’, they lose the feeling of duty” (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881c, p. 2, our emphasis). In other words: the competitive examination that should recognize the intellectual merits of the candidates as to teaching was ruled by political opinion.

The brief biographical profile *Emilio Littré*, by José Veríssimo, was published in serial columns in the newspaper *Gazeta de Notícias* in July 1881. Dedicated to the youth of Pará, in December 1881, it was bound in a 49-page booklet format (Prisco, 1937). The editorial staff of *O Liberal do Pará* was graced with a copy, and this receipt was recorded in the ‘Emilio Littré’ note:

The talented José Veríssimo, from our very same province, gathered in a booklet the articles he published in ‘*Gazeta de Notícias*’ about Emilio Littré and Positive Philosophy, adding a new controversial article.

Mr. José Veríssimo did a good job to society by spreading, ‘in a more concrete manner’, ‘modern ideas’, as opposed to the ‘reactionary principles’ circulating among us.

The illustrious writer was right in offering his production to the ‘youth’, because it is upon this enlightened group of the century that the full ‘annihilation of prejudices and backward ideas’ depend.

We are also grateful for the copy we have been gifted.

(*O Liberal do Pará*, 1881b, p. 1, our emphasis).

The editor of *O Liberal do Pará*, in the midst of praises and gifts, established the gradient of interpretation and reception of the forces of ‘scientific politics’ concerning José Veríssimo’s booklet. The biography about Émile Littré meant the exposure of ‘modern ideas’ as opposed to ‘reactionary principles’ and ‘backward ideas’, contributing, in its turn, to the ‘annihilation of prejudices’ being spread among youths in Pará. For this reason, it is possible to state that the biography about Littré dialogued directly with the political debate in the province by openly expressing José Veríssimo’s political ‘opinions’.

When he wrote the biographical profile, Veríssimo pointed out that ‘positive philosophy’ was the sure base of the ‘mental renewal’ demanded by the progress of mankind, because this “[...] was found neither [in the] hypothetical creations of metaphysics, nor [in the] entities of theology [...]” (*Gazeta de Notícias*, 1881a, p. 2); he also took on the role of Émile Littré’s disciple – in this case, the position of an heterodox positivist –, when recognizing his justification for dissidence within the ‘small positivist school’. Littré was a sectarian of the ‘positive method’, bypassing ‘positive religion’, espoused by Pierre Laffitte. This consideration by the editor of *O Liberal do Pará* authorized José Veríssimo to play the role of publicist of ‘modern ideas’ – represented, in this context of the province, by the positivism based on Émile Littré’s dissidence.

In the set of works by Auguste Comte (1798-1857), two were fundamental: *Cursos de filosofia positiva* (*Courses on Positive Philosophy*), which proposed a synthesis and a method for positive knowledge, and *Sistema de política positiva e catecismo positivista* (*System of Positive Politics and Positivist Catechism*), both proposing a political science and a positive religion. Two currents were created within positivism, headed by two disciples, after Comte’s death: the Émile Littré current – heterodox –, which defended the positive method as the main legacy, and the Pierre Laffitte group – orthodox –, which fully accepted the positivist philosophical system. These two perspectives were the main forms of appropriation of the Comtean legacy among Brazilian positivists. In Pará, Lauro Sodré and José Veríssimo, two eminent positivists, were enthusiastic about Émile Littré (Lins, 1967; Azzi, 1980; Alonso, 2002; Coelho, 2006).

In 1871, Littré was admitted to the French Academy, after publishing his *Diccionario* (*Dictionary*), and following the dismissal of infamous Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans; both facts were ‘highlighted’ in the profile written by Veríssimo, as they

represented an intervention in the political debate in the province: the relationship between the Catholic church and free thinkers (deemed atheists). This admission received the 'rude attack of clericalism' in a letter addressed by the bishop to the editorial staff of the 'Catholic newspaper *Le Monde*', in which he postulated the criteria to be adopted by the French Academy in the admission of its members, especially, "[...] when opinions appear in public and with noise [which they cause] [...]", considering that "[...] the Academy 'cannot sanction all opinions'" (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881b, p. 2, our emphasis).

In other words: "Definitely, the truth as to this matter is simple: 'when it comes to professed opinions, there is a limit', there has always been, there should always be, here or anywhere else" (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881b, p. 2, author's emphasis). For Bishop Dupanloup, with emphasis by Veríssimo for the context of the province, "[...] atheists can only be admitted to the Academy if they are careful not to profess their opinion publicly" (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881b, p. 2, our emphasis). From emphasis, Veríssimo moved on to 'open criticism': "This is, in fact, the doctrine of 'official hypocrisy', in force in the Church; due to the manifestation of dissident ideas beginning with the Reform, this hybrid entity known as the religion of the State, the 'official belief'", was created (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881b, p. 2, our emphasis).

By evidencing the 'official hypocrisy', Veríssimo fought against the 'reactionary principles' and the 'backward ideas' associated with the Catholic church. In the context of the province, the clashes between the forces of 'imperial tradition' and 'scientific politics' were marked by two casualties that delimited 'marginalization' as to access to political and bureaucratic resources by young representatives of 'modern ideas': the dismissal of Lauro Sodré as interim History teacher, and José Veríssimo failing the competitive examination for the French chair, both positions at Liceu Paraense. These constraints suggested the 'decadence' dimension of the imperial politics, the fight against which was mediated by a 'repertoire' that mobilized scientific arguments linked to positivism, in particular, and to scientism, in general, and secular values associated with the guarantee of civil rights and with the secularization of the institutions of the Imperial state.

Indeed, the year 1881 was a remarkable moment in José Veríssimo's political and pedagogical formation. In this context, it should be noted, Veríssimo was a French teacher at Collegio Americano, back then an establishment owned by Justus W. Nelson, a Methodist missionary in Pará. Open to the public since January, the school, as of March, started to publish advertisements searching for a French teacher on the pages of *Diário de Belém*. In April, José Veríssimo's name appeared as a French, Portuguese and History teacher in the school's announcements. As of 1884, José Veríssimo and Justus W. Nelson shared the direction of the school, although their partnership was ephemeral – there were divergences over the pedagogical innovations carried out by Veríssimo, such as the 'kindergarten' and



the secularity of teaching –, making José Veríssimo its owner between 1884 and 1890 (Moraes, 2018). Therefore, this pedagogical experience in private education in the province enabled him to compete for the French chair at Liceu Paraense.

From the point of view of political formation, up until then he was a young journalist affiliated with the Liberal Party, who was coming into contact with the repertoire of ‘scientific politics’, especially the liberalism and positivism turned into a militant anti-clericalism. Due to this ‘engagement’, José Veríssimo suffered the interdiction of ‘political marginalization’ mechanisms when, due to his ‘political opinions’ he was rejected the French chair at Liceu Paraense, “[...] the ill-disposed individuals that left them out ‘failed to acknowledge their merit’ while holding on to ‘opinions’ [...]” (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881c, p. 2). Just as the writer for *Gazeta de Notícias* had reported about the rumor of politicking in the competitive examination in question, it was the ‘knowledge of power’ manifesting itself, benefiting some, harming others, on the basis of ‘political opinion’. Nevertheless, the discussion about the competitive examination had also occupied the pages of the newspapers *O Liberal do Pará* and *A Constituição*, representatives of liberal and conservative positions, respectively, within the political spectrum of the province of Pará.

The first page of *O Liberal do Pará*, of August 25, 1881, also reported what happened in the competitive examination for the French chair at Liceu Paraense, commenting on an article published in *A Constituição*, which addressed the appointment of Dr. João Antônio Luiz Coelho. The editorial staff of *A Constituição*, ‘with an envy-worthy frankness’, disapproved this appointment, considering that Egydio Duarte and Pinto Marques suited the position best.

While *A Constituição* indiscriminately proclaimed this argument, “[...] which is based on statements rather than proofs [...]”, *O Liberal do Pará* resorted to caution when assessing that “[...] it is not licit to let such information run around the world without protesting against it in the name of justice” (*O Liberal do Pará*, 1881a, p. 1); if the competitive examination was marked by injustice, the latter was not restricted to the two protégés of *A Constituição*, relegating the other prejudiced candidates to oblivion, in this case, Mr. Cabral and Mr. José Veríssimo.

The editor of *O Liberal do Pará* examined the candidates’ performance, pursuing his ideal of justice:

If *A Constituição* compares the tests of these two candidates [Egydio Duarte and Pinto Marques] and those of Mr. Coelho, it will see that he is inferior to both, with these two individuals presenting no greater inaccuracies or flaws than those of Mr. Pinto Marques; as for Mr. Egydio, he did not even finish the test, so laborious was the delivery that gave birth to that production.

Let us see how these three candidates speak French by resorting to those who heard the examinees; Mr. Pinto Marques speaks French well, there is no doubt, but, or because, if he took longer in France, or due to a greater ease in

his vocal organs, nobody would say in good faith that Mr. Coelho does not speak with greater elegance and purity than Mr. Pinto Marques does.

When it comes to grammar, Mr. Pinto Marques is good indeed, but all of the questions asked about French grammar itself was satisfactorily answered by his antagonist.

However, just as we recognize the skills referred to as belonging to Mr. Pinto Marques, we cannot fail to recognize that, on the oral test, he performed far from satisfactorily, since his manners of exposure fell short from expectations.

We should also mention that the pronounced deafness of Mr. Pinto Marques also placed Mr. Coelho above him before the consciousness of a fair judge.

As for Mr. Egydio, who was not even able to finish his written test, with terrible pronunciation, one could say that, not speaking French, with a greater number of errors and inaccuracies, since the very first day defeated by his contenders and, therefore, out of the fight according to the public opinion, could be chosen neither by the congregation nor by the presidency

(O Liberal do Pará, 1881a, p. 1, author's emphasis).

By taking on the role of guardian of justice and of the public opinion, the editor sought to show that the criticisms of *A Constituição* were unfounded, and pointed out that José Veríssimo and Cabral were the ones who suffered injustice. While the writer for *Gazeta de Notícias* generically denounced *politicking* in the evaluation process of the competitive examination, the editor of *O Liberal do Pará* clearly indicated the names and interests in dispute.

The injustice of *A Constituição* is evident, saying that only these two candidates could be preferred, although, above them, there were Mr. José Veríssimo and Mr. Cabral.

If the censures that *A Constituição* addresses to Mr. Dantas never go beyond these heights, you will not have much work excusing yourself.

[...] and the editor of *A Constituição*, if indeed committed to the duties of a journalist, he should, on the Liceu Paraense matter, be less passionate about his fellow editor Mr. Peres Duarte

(O Liberal do Pará, 1881a, p. 1, author's emphasis).

As it became evident, Peres Duarte had great interest in the approval of Egydio Duarte, since both were brothers. Probably, Pinto Marques joined Peres Duarte's complaint to avoid, if that was possible with such evident kinship, that

Egydio Duarte was favored more directly. However, if kinship was at stake, the political opinion was in dispute as well, since the Duarte brothers were conservatives. In *A Constituição's* protest against injustice, the 'security' of kinship and the 'interest' of political opinion were equated.

In his turn, as a prejudiced party of interest, in order to ascertain what happened during the competitive examination in which he was given a failing score, José Veríssimo contacted the members of the board by mail. Mr. Henrique de La Rocque Junior, German teacher, and Dr. Ignacio Justo Ribeiro, Latin teacher, sent letters – both published – in which they spontaneously guaranteed not to have given him that score. These were the words of the Latin teacher:

Upon receiving the news that you complained that I was the teacher who gave you the failing score, I judged appropriate to hereby declare that I did not give a failing score to any of the competitive examination candidates; if there was any failing score, it came from those who had an 'interest' in leaving you out together with Mr. Pinto Marques for greater 'security'.

I ask you to tell the informant to be brave enough to sustain such infamy in my presence.

You may use this letter as you wish.

(Gazeta de Notícias, 1881d, p. 2, author's emphasis).

Henrique de La Rocque also addressed a letter to José Veríssimo, published in *Gazeta de Notícias*.

About the letter you sent me yesterday, which I have just received, asking me to, with all loyalty and frankness, declare if it was I who, on the occasion of the French exam, gave you the failing score that resulted in your rejection, I answer conscientiously and willingly: no, it was not me, because I voted for you, giving you a passing score.

You may use this answer of mine as you wish [...]

(Gazeta de Notícias, 1881e, p. 1).

From this investigation, duly documented, Veríssimo drew two conclusions:

This is a very serious business, which requires the greatest frankness and loyalty.

Having all declared that none voted against me, there are only two conclusions to be drawn:

1st, I was the victim of a mistake;

2nd, or whoever failed me is so sure about having committed an injustice that, he not only does not dare to declare it, but is also quick to deny it. In both cases, I consider myself justified and I am very satisfied.

(Gazeta de Notícias, 1881d, p. 2).

His objective was to investigate who had consciously harmed him in the competitive examination, because whoever committed a willful injustice was nothing but a rogue: "My purpose in this matter – which is far from over – is to prove that whoever failed me made a conscious mistake and committed an injustice while aware he was doing so, being therefore a rogue" (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881e, p. 1, our emphasis). Therefore, 'Finding a rogue' was the contribution of this public scrutiny, "[...] it is a service that I will be proud to have done to Pará society" (Gazeta de Notícias, 1881e, p. 1).

The competitive examination for the teaching position at Liceu Paraense was one of the arenas of the political debate. The only public secondary education institution in the province had become responsible, at the same time, for training new cadres of the intellectual and political elite, and for legitimizing those who joined its faculty. Liceu Paraense emerged as a space for the reproduction and consolidation of the political and intellectual elite in the province. For this reason, a teaching position there was highly coveted and contested (França, 1997).

Politicking was part of the evaluation criteria in the competitive examinations for chairs at the institution, as the writer for *Gazeta de Notícias* makes us believe when pointing out that the exams were 'devoid of passion', with the teaching staff being much more inclined to the interdiction of 'political opinions' than judging the candidates' 'intellectual merits'. Some candidates were given failing scores for the 'interest' and 'security' of those who were already promised a position, the 'official candidate' – the beneficiary of the 'knowledge of power'.

This practice of professional interdiction was carried out on the basis of political criteria. José Veríssimo did not have his knowledge of the French language judged according to his merit, because the object of evaluation was his political opinions associated with 'scientific politics'. A similar situation occurred with Lauro Sodré, former interim History teacher at Liceu Paraense.

In 1881, the controversy between the young 2nd lieutenant, Lauro Sodré, and Dom Macedo Costa, distinguished bishop, stirred political passions on the pages of *A Boa Nova* and *A Província do Pará*. In a retrospective note, from 1896, when his journalistic texts were republished, with the title *A philosophia positiva (Positive Philosophy)*, Lauro Sodré shed light on the causes of the quarrel. His collaborations in academic journals and in the newspaper *A Província do Pará*, press organizations

that defended the “[...] dogma of the emancipation of conscience [...]”, were considered “[...] audacious heresy in Pará’s catholic society” (Sodré, 1997, p. 247).

At that time, Lauro Sodré was an interim History teacher at Liceu Paraense and, following “[...] the curses and protests from ‘indignant’ consciences [...]” (Sodré, 1997, p. 247), orchestrated by the editorial staff of the newspaper *A Boa Nova*, was removed from office after a few days. According to Sodré, those were times of ‘philosophical intolerance’, printed, in these terms, by the godly staff of the Catholic newspaper:

It is not about us being Christians, Catholics; even if we were Muslims, Buddhists, etc., we could not ‘tolerate’ the appointment of such a notorious public atheist as a teacher, guide and influencer of the youth while he so scandalously brags about his atheism, his most brutal materialism (Sodré, 1997, p. 247, author’s emphasis).

On August 17 and 18, 1881, the editorial staff of *A Província do Pará*, with the articles *O ensino oficial e os livros pensadores* (*On Official Teaching and Free Thinkers*), defended the republican serviceman in response to the “[...] exaggerated intolerance preached by the Catholic newspaper”. The defense of positivism against Catholicism, by Lauro Sodré, took place in this context of professional persecution for political reasons.

Both José Veríssimo and Lauro Sodré had their access to the institution interrupted, thus preventing material security and professional recognition, as they were for the secularization of the civil institutions of the State and quite anticlerical in their criticism of the State-Church patronage – nevertheless, for these criticisms, they were considered ‘atheists’ in a profoundly Catholic society.

Such interdictions and constraints imposed on these young intellectuals a feeling of ‘decadence’ of the imperial institutions and of professional and political ‘marginalization’. Their political militancy questioned the imperial institutions, especially the political centralization and the State-Church alliance, while indicating federation and secularization as the way out to a ‘secular’ and ‘federative civilization’ in the Amazon. Within this militancy, ‘public instruction’ stood out as a form of political intervention: this is how the Instruction-Promoting Society of Pará initiative emerged.

Although it had an ephemeral life – as a considerable part of associations, clubs, societies and journals focused on political debate –, I consider that the Society was a formative space for José Veríssimo’s first experiences with the educational discussion. The Society’s proposal was to promote regular *meetings* and conferences on topics of relevance in the educational field. There was belief in the power of ‘advertisement’ and ‘dissemination’, with the aim, at the same time, of

updating Pará society about 'modern ideas' and developing an illustrated 'public opinion'.

### **'KNOWLEDGE IS POWER': 'ENGAGEMENT' IN THE INSTRUCTION-PROMOTING SOCIETY OF PARÁ**

With an invitation by José Veríssimo to the illustrious society of Pará printed on the pages of *O Liberal do Pará*, the Society was founded at 10:00, on May 13, 1883, with a speech by its president, counselor Tito Franco de Almeida, in the noble hall of Pará Assembly.

“Ladies and Gentlemen – Body of the ‘Instruction-Promoting Society of Pará’, I am honored to inaugurate it. What is the thought that feeds it, what are the hopes that fondle it, the means of action that caress it, the results that it longs for?” (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 94, author’s emphasis). With these introductory words, counselor Tito Franco de Almeida sought to articulate the agenda with a premise: ‘Knowledge is power’, that is, “We want to spread – with our hands full – ‘instruction’, which is the great instrument of the ‘beneficial triumph’ of civilization” (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 94, our emphasis). Therefore, the political action program of the association consisted of ‘disseminating instruction’, whose watchword was ‘Knowledge is power’.

During his speech at the conference, counselor Tito Franco de Almeida credited to the 19<sup>th</sup> century the advent of the democratic society, with one of its greatest achievements being the ‘creation of schools’: “[...] the cornerstone of the magnificent building of all sincere friends of humanity, efficient workers, though modest and selfless, of all future glories” (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 94). However, he recognized that the Church and its priests had taken on, and were still embracing, this ‘mission’ of spreading education, since each parish had a school, each cathedral had a library.

Thus, the president of the Society presented two new principles for the dissemination of instruction. On the one hand, at the same time that intelligence was being improved through teachings on how to read Virgil, on the gods of Ovid, on how to translate Plato’s dreams, there was need for a ‘hands-on teaching’ in industrial schools. On the other hand, he defended an unlimited ‘teaching freedom’ for founding and directing instruction and education institutes, as this would guarantee civil rights among all different expressions of faith.

“It is necessary to obey the historical truth [...]” by going back to these antecedents, for they provided precious elements to understand the present: “This is a time of great reforms, a revolutionary century. Let us reform, not for worse, which would mean moving backward; let us bring down the fortresses and strongholds of ‘ignorance’, build ‘monuments to science’, because to destroy

without building would be to demolish [...]”, and because to resort to history meant always standing as “Children of this century, with its astounding progress in all branches of human knowledge, we deem a fundamental dogma ‘freedom for all’, even for our own enemies” (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 96, our emphasis).

By characterizing the intellectual movement of its time, by taking a stance in the context of transformations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the association ratified its political-educational program: “The ‘Instruction-Promoting Society of Pará’ promises a lay or civil education, because we should only offer what we know and can teach [...]”; that is, it was imperative to teach scientific progress with passion, keeping up with the speed of scientific progress, “Let us teach, therefore, with the passion of reformists, and with the speed of revolutionaries” (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 96, author’s emphasis).

However, the pace of scientific progress had a well-known brake: *ignorance*. According to the president-speaker, the monopoly of public instruction in the hands of the State (from higher education to primary education) sustained indifference and a weakness of spirit; the imperial government hindered the spirit of association and of private initiative: “The State bears the weight of a burden it cannot take. Always wanting to inspire, to foresee, to act, to become responsible for everything that does not concern it, because it has prevented private initiative or associations” (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 96).

To support his argument in defense of private initiative in education, counselor Tito Franco de Almeida mentioned the case of the United States. While American citizens deposited their dollars directly in schools, “[...] we, Brazilians, have assigned this duty to the State, whose budgets are so scanty”; in this way, he associated private initiative with “[...] the real foundation of the civilization of the nation, of its wealth, prosperity and power” (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 97).

Coupled with private initiative, as a means to develop the spirit of association, it became essential to promote a more ‘practical’ and ‘dynamic’ education, whose result would be to spark curiosity and a desire to learn among youths. However, he stressed that the spirit of association was not exclusive to the latter but, acting through education, would encompass broad segments of civil society.

From a political point of view, in support of private initiative as a promoter of education, and in defense of active and practical methods in teaching, counselor Tito Franco de Almeida’s speech assigned the Society with the premises of liberalism: instruction must destroy the dams of ignorance, bringing the lights of civilization to everyone. Hence the emphasis on regular conferences to ‘enlighten’ Pará society.

With the political-educational action based on the ‘dissemination’ and ‘advertisement’ of instruction as a civilizing principle, the Society used a circuit of

practical activities: a) 'lectures and conferences': "[...] besides the instruction they pour out, [...] they bring all classes together, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the sexes, that is, an approximation that forms bonds of mutual services, of mutual protection, of friendships, oftentimes eternal [...]", in view of their employment in "[...] large enlightened centers, such as Paris and London, Berlin and Munich, Ghent and Boston etc."; b) 'libraries': "[...] which meet the burning need of those who do not have the means to educate themselves, or time to attend courses, lectures and conferences"; c) 'museums and exhibitions': "[...] because sight is the best supporting element of intelligence"; d) "journals": "[...] the great vehicle of universal education, the magnificent engine of modern civilization" (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 97).

"It is clear how modest our social aspiration is: – 'to teach what everyone should know'" (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 97, author's emphasis). With this intention, towards the end of the conference, the president of the Society pondered that two matters – one in the present, and the other in the future – were established with the emergence of the association: the first was evidenced in the 'desire to work', to fulfill the political-educational program exposed at the conference; the second, derived from efforts and obligations agreed upon, "[...] is [was] about success crowning the great ambition of the true friends of humanity" (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 97).

In the political-educational program of the Society, public instruction became a civilizing tool to fight ignorance and build monuments to science, through maximum 'dissemination' and 'advertisement' of the manifestations of the human spirit. At the same time that private initiative was considered the safest way to build civilization, practical and dynamic teaching was the most fruitful method to reach all ages and social classes. A circuit of political and cultural activities, developed within the civil society of Pará, was presented as a way to shed the lights of instruction. From conferences and public lectures to libraries, from museums and exhibitions to journals: a diversity of educational practices converged to 'teach what everyone should know'; a political-educational program that accumulated efforts to consolidate the watchword 'Knowledge is power'.

With this presentation of reasons duly reported to Pará society, the first conference was held with the title *O método intuitivo Froebel para a educação da primeira infância* (*Froebel's Intuitive Method for Early Childhood Education*), by Domingos J. B. de Almeida, on May 27, 1883, and published in the May issue of *Revista Amazonica*, with its title changed to "A educação da infância" ("Childhood Education").

In *O Liberal do Pará*, a brief announcement invited the 'lovers of civilization and progress', at 11:00, in the hall of Grêmio Literário Português, to attend the first



conference of the Instruction-Promoting Society of Pará, held by Domingos d'Almeida.

The stand will be composed of Mr. Dr. Domingos J. B. de Almeida, who will address the theme 'Froebel's intuitive method', dedicated to the education of children.

He will not only explain, with the expertise and eloquence he possesses, the advantages resulting from this method in spreading instruction among youths, but will also prove, with maps and drawings, the excellent results obtained through it.

Since this is a celebration of intelligence, from which the most profitable and healthy fruits must spring, we appeal to the lovers of progress and civilization, asking them not to refuse to join said conference, thus contributing to the seed spread among us by the instruction-promoting society producing everything we expect from it.

(O Liberal do Pará, 1883c, p. 2, author's emphasis).

The scientific findings and knowledge advances of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the lecturer asserted, were combined with two major events in the history of mankind. Whereas the discovery of the experimental method by Francisco Bacon was responsible for progress in the sciences, the French Revolution promoted the emancipation of peoples, enabling mankind to enjoy freedom.

The exercise of freedom and the use of modern science allowed, with a speed never seen before, the emergence of scientific, artistic, industrial and agricultural discoveries, but the same speed was not observed in the education of men, whose pace was slow and delayed: "What is the cause? This is because 'instruction' has been privileged over 'education'; however, education is truly capable of bringing about instruction, but instruction alone will not bring about education" (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 108, our emphasis).

The distinction between 'instruction' and 'education' was one of the structuring arguments of the lecture. The lecturer stated: the progress of the social world depended on the articulation of three factors, namely, the physical, moral and intellectual dimensions of human ingenuity. There was an exclusive association between instruction and intellect. In its turn, education developed the comprehensive formation (physical, moral and intellectual) of men. The 'scientific men', to the detriment of the 'practical men', arose therefore from this mismatch between instruction and education, respectively.

As the conference went on, Domingos d'Almeida sought to bring the theoretical definition to life by giving practical examples. Skills involving the arts,

crafts, industry and agriculture were typical of 'practical men'. As a consequence of their excessive theoretical knowledge, the 'scientific men' were materialized in the figure of bachelors: "[...] Bachelors overpower everything, deceive everyone; they are the worst of France's cancers [...]", (Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 109); when quoting Alphonse Karr, the lecturer assured, a similar evil was affecting Brazil.

Still on the path of concrete examples, the speaker referred to initiatives from 'remarkable Brazilians', who recommended a profound reform, pointing out instruction issues in the Empire. First of all, Domingos d'Almeida mentioned a conference he had held at Escola da Glória, on October 24, 1880, on education and kindergartens, when he spoke of actions and proposals capable of filling an education gap in childhood. Secondly, he commented on the decree of April 19, 1879, by counselor Leôncio de Carvalho, which authorized the foundation of 'children gardens' in all districts of the neutral municipality.

He then described that Menezes de Vieira had attached to his school a 'children garden', managed by his wife, following the guidelines of Froebel's intuitive method. Finally, he noted that, at Escola Normal, under the responsibility of teacher Zaluar, the discipline 'practical teaching of things', also known as 'lessons on things', was taught. All of these initiatives and efforts, according to the lecturer, only highlighted the gap in Brazilian childhood education.

On the basis of distinction and of the examples given, as a diagnosis, Domingos d'Almeida presented his proposal for political-educational intervention, the second argument of the conference: childhood education was the pillar of civilized society; the backbone of the formation of men, citizens and parents; the cornerstone that engendered women, mothers and wives.

Childhood education is the fundamental basis on which civilization and the progress of peoples depend. Without it, instruction not always or hardly reaches the point of bearing the fruits desired, because children can soon be riddled, physically and morally, with irreparable defects and flaws.

(Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 110).

At the same time that childhood fills our nostalgic reminiscences, it can become the source of the evils and vices caused by lack of education. While education exclusively developed intelligence, its benefits alone could not overcome the harmful inclinations of bad character and bad habits obtained by the 'organism' in the first seven years of life.

In the final remarks of the conference, based on two quotations, one belonging to the speaker himself, and the other to Friedrich Froebel, the arguments exposed were tied to the idea of 'kindergarten' as a 'comprehensive childhood

education'. First, using a biological metaphor, Domingo d'Almeida converted children into plants that needed cultivation, that needed to be grown.

Childhood is like fragile plants in gardens, which do not even bloom but die right after sprouting from the ground, regardless of receiving water, air and light, or being constantly protected from the weeds that suck their sap and cause them to wither, and the worms that eat and kill them.

(Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 110).

Afterwards, the speaker transcribes an excerpt from *L'Education de l'homme*, (*The Education of Man*) by Froebel.

When the development of men in the first phases of life is put aside, the march of education is postponed; this forgetfulness, this very vulgar neglect is for men, most of the times, the deplorable cause that deflects them from the target to which their faculties and aspirations were aimed. Let the different ages form a successive, uninterrupted chain (concerning education).

(Revista Amazônica, 1883a, p. 110).

For Domingos d'Almeida, childhood education was the foundation of a prosperous and civilized society; child development should not be restricted to the intellect, creating limited 'bachelors' who possess abstract knowledge. His political-educational proposal established a balance between instruction and education, by fostering growth in equal proportions of intellectual capacity, moral sensibility and physical ability. Education reconciled the 'scientific man' with the 'practical man'.

The inaugural conference held by counselor Tito Franco de Almeida and the lecture given by Domingos d'Almeida introduced the political and educational program of the Society. In summary: the opening conference emphasized that 'Knowledge is power' and that it was necessary to employ all means and efforts to shed the lights of instruction; such a commitment recognized in childhood the foundation of a civilized society, and the way to progress was assured in the comprehensive formation of human faculties.

In July 1883, José Veríssimo spoke at the conference *O Movimento Intellectual Brasileiro nos últimos dez annos*. His goal was to expose "[...] the formidable intellectual movement that stirs the entire civilized world" (Revista Amazônica, 1883b, p. 167). Such a movement was structured in the discoveries of *positive science*, overcoming theological speculation and vague idealism; Europe was considered an 'immense laboratory' that supplied the whole world with philosophical systems, scientific theories, literary ideas and artistic creations.

Using Mr. Dr. Sylvio Romero's piece of work as reference – namely, *A filosofia no Brasil (Philosophy in Brazil)* –, José Veríssimo stated that this intellectual-renewal movement in Brazil started in 1873. Up until that moment, the Brazilian intellectual life was limited to erudite publications on history and law and “[...] suffocated in the imperial court by romantic idolatry” (Revista Amazônica, 1883b, p. 168): “In fact, since the independence until 1873, there is not, as far as I know, except perhaps for *Flora fluminense (The Flora of Rio de Janeiro)* by Velloso, one single valuable piece of work on Brazilian science” (Revista Amazônica, 1883b, p. 168).

Three ‘generating causes’, according to the speaker, were responsible for the intellectual renewal in the country: the Paraguayan War, the 1870 Republican Movement and the Religious Question. The common element of these causes was the awakening of a ‘national conscience’. Upon verifying this awakening, Veríssimo recorded noteworthy manifestations in philosophy, in the literature (romance, poetry and theater) and in the natural sciences. The restoration of Colégio Pedro II, the creation of Escola Politécnica, starting from Escola Central, and the foundation of Escola de Minas de Ouro Preto were also evidence of the efforts in the sense of renewal – with the last two geared toward teaching physical, mathematical and natural sciences. In a continuous act, the National Museum was restored, and its magazine *Archivos* was updated; the journal *Ensaio de Sciencia*, dedicated to the study of indigenous languages and to the sciences of language, was published, and so were the *Annals* of the National Library.

“At the same time, in the provinces, there was an equal movement of spirits” (Revista Amazônica, 1883, p. 17b4); thus, Veríssimo catalogued relevant works – from philosophy to history – produced in Pernambuco, Ceará, Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo. He also acknowledged eminent representatives of the ‘modern trends of the Brazilian intellect’ in the sciences, in history, in literary criticism, in literature, mentioning Machado de Assis, Sílvio Romero, Araripe Júnior, Escragnolle Taunay, Franklin Távora, and others. Finally, he ended the conference with a wish: “[...] may Pará not be left out of this movement, and understand that, for its glory and honor, and for the material happiness of a people, ‘making rubber is not enough’” (Revista Amazônica, 1883b, p. 177, author’s emphasis).

José Veríssimo corroborated with the political-educational program of the Society; by tracing a history of the intellectual, scientific and artistic movement in the Court and in the provinces, he sought to ‘spread’ the main forms of manifestation of ‘positive science’ in the Brazilian scenario. This way, he helped shape the opinion of Pará society in favor of ‘modern ideas’; in this attempt, he also urged the province to follow the ‘movement of spirits’, because progress and civilization were not restricted to ‘making rubber’.

## FINAL REMARKS

In the final reflections of this article, I intend to point out the interpretative relevance that the experiences of ‘marginalization’ in the Liceu Paraense competitive examination and of ‘engagement’ in the Society enable for one to understand José Veríssimo’s pedagogical journey in Pará. Because it is necessary to place this journey in the ‘historical context’ and ‘political process’. In the context of economic modernization resulting from the opening of the Amazon River to international navigation, and from the export of rubber to the international market. As well as in the political process of polarization between ‘imperial tradition’ and ‘scientific politics’ in the context of the Second Reign, from the emergence of the ‘1870 Generation’ political-intellectual movement. Thus, in the Province of Pará, José Veríssimo’s educational experience incorporated the repertoire of *scientific politics* – this ‘political dimension’ is fundamental to understand this journey in two movements (Moraes, 2018).

Firstly, in the transition from ‘dissemination’ to ‘educational practice’, from the Instruction-Promoting Society of Pará (1883-1884) to Collegio Americano (1884-1890); from the public disclosure platform to the private experimentation laboratory: the Society is considered a political-cultural practice that questions the imperial status quo from an educational point of view and the ‘school’ as an institution of ‘organization of culture’, by selecting and legitimizing ‘modern’ educational knowledge for the youth of Pará. Secondly, *A educação nacional* (1890) is taken as a theoretical synthesis derived from the pedagogical practice of José Veríssimo at Collegio Americano; at the same time, it is worth noting that this theoretical reflection was incorporated by the educational ‘public policy’ of the republican State under construction, as of the administration of José Veríssimo as Public Instruction director (1889-1890).

Indeed, the concept of education of Collegio Americano was based on the assumptions of ‘comprehensive childhood education’ and on the distinction between ‘education and instruction’; the Society’s contributions in the transition from ‘dissemination’ to ‘educational practice’ is made evident. The ‘experiences’ in the competitive examination for the French chair at Liceu Paraense and in the Society allowed José Veríssimo to learn about professional interdiction and political-cultural militancy as the two facets of ‘knowledge of power’ and ‘knowledge is power’. In this context, the educational project of Collegio Americano emerged under the management of José Veríssimo, from the influx of ‘marginalization’ and ‘engagement’. Therefore, I reiterate, the search for the ‘rogues’ who prejudiced him in the competitive examination and his role of secretary/lecturer of the Society were not marginal events in José Veríssimo’s educational journey, since they represented his first contacts with the experience of

'making oneself political' (Thompson, 1981, 1987) in a context that questioned the imperial institutions in the province of Pará.

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