

Rituals of Schooling and Gender*

Rosângela Tenório Carvalho**

Abstract

This article discusses ritual as an element that intensifies gender realities. It analyzes ritualistic statements in the pedagogical discourse of school education in nineteenth century Italy. The analysis understands the performative character of rituals; pedagogy as disciplinary practice; and the role of performative action in the production of subjects of gender. The analysis focuses on: the relationship between ritual and disciplinary practices; the ritual scene; the role of the family in the ritual of passage; the affirmation of gender in reception rituals; and the myths of femininity presented in the ritual of the lesson.

Keywords: Disciplinarity, Gender, Performativity, Rituals.

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** Professor in the Pedagogy Course and Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University at Pernambuco, Recife, PE, Brazil. rosangelatc@gmail.com / <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1025-4736>

Introduction

The theoretical object of this article is performative utterances of gender in rituals in the context of school education in 19th century Italy. The purpose is to reveal the emergence of apparatuses of gender production at a time that it became possible to examine the condition of gender in schooling. Using elements of 19th century educational practices allows constructing objects of knowledge in this field and can help critically analyze what takes place in schooling in relation to gender today.

The premise of the relationship between ritual and gender performance is supported by studies that observe the performative characters of rituals (Tambiah, 1997) in convergence with works that point to disciplining practices that support pedagogy (Foucault, 2015) and others that relate the cultural production of the subject of gender and performative action of discourses in a power relation (Butler, 2003). From these perspectives, the performative function of ritual is established by the use of language in the sense that the pronouncement of words constitutes ritual; by the use of the scene as a ritual in which words, gestures, mimicry, the articulation of feelings and symbolic activity can generate certain meanings; and by the use of values that can be seen in the rules of a certain culture.

However, by addressing the theme of rituals, which is an interdisciplinary field of knowledge, this article is not limited to the proposals of the studies mentioned; and includes, among others, conceptual elements developed by Cultural Studies that address culture, discourse, language, pedagogy and the relationship between ritualistic discursive practices and gender subjectivities. A closed theoretical framing is not the goal, conceptual elements appropriated in previous studies are used, considering that, “No one can free themselves all at once from the ancestral theories from which they drank” (Andrade, 1987:60).

Rituals are examined in many fields of knowledge as an important, structuring, valuable action, in their function of production of meaning, such as a collective rituality of a presentation of Beethoven as revered by Eco (1984); or as an element of distinction between the truth of artifice and life as Sontag (2015:116) observed when examining theater as ritual.

The sacred rituals, central objects of the religiosities of the Middle Age, did not disappear with the changes caused by modern societies. Actually, they have been transformed. In the field of education, they are called profane rituals, such as the ritual of passage to school, entrance rituals, those of lessons, commemoration, meals and ceremonies (Rivière, 1996).

The implications of rituals in the issue of gender are discussed in the discourse of feminists, as in the book *The Second Sex: Facts and Myths* by Simone de Beauvoir (1970), which criticizes how the bourgeoisie enslaves women to the kitchen, the home, and monitors her customs and confines her “in a ritual of *savoir-vivre*, which blocks any attempt at independence” (Beauvoir, 1970:145); and in the instigating book *Sputiamo su Hegel e Altri Scritti* de Carla Lonzi, who in 1970 observed how culture, ideology, codes, institutions and rituals are involved in the circulation of male superstitions about women and how they influence arrogant behavior (Lonzi, 2013:32).

However, in these works, rituals are treated within a group of other apparatuses that guide the mode of comprehending the human condition of gender and sexuality. In other ways, recent studies about processes of production of gender identities have more emphatically indicated rituals as an apparatus of gender. While these studies have singularities, they all approach rituals as objects of knowledge in the objectivation of people in their gender relations and the understanding of gender as a historic construction. They address the production of gender identities from different possibilities: the role of food as an identity tool, because when associated to rituals, food acts upon gender identity (Leonini, 2014); the relationship between consumption and rituals of refined domesticity and femininity of aesthetics in the domestic sphere (Sassateli, 2006); initiation rites in the socialization of children, affecting their destinies in such a way that their lives would be subject to the logics of male domination (Silva, 2011); school rituals that wind up producing a scholastic body (Louro, 2010).

Butler’s (2003) studies show how gender identity and sexual identity are produced by means of repeated performative enunciations. Butler is interested in the power of language as discourse that institutes gender. In her performative theory of gender, she articulates the conditions of gender and sex minorities with the issue of precarious life (Butler, 2017:48), which makes her reflection about performativity of gender powerful and instigating.

Contemporary approaches with empiric material of a socio-anthropological nature reveal the power of gender studies mobilized by the notion of performativity. Examples include an ethnographic study in the school context by Bueno (2012), which problematizes effects of images of princesses in the construction of femininity among children, and Pontes' (2018) study focused on experiences related to conviviality of children in beauty salon services, to analyze how the categories of body and beauty are handled by children and how they operate in the production of their self images.

From this perspective, but without the scope of the works mentioned, the methodological work of the analysis presented in this article borrows from Cultural Studies, an amalgam of studies that have cultures as their object. In this sense, it is a cultural analysis of gender discourse in the context of profane rituals, in the case of schooling.

The analysis is based on official texts, and pedagogical manuals from the XIX century: *Elementi de Pedagogia e Didattica Applicati All'insegnamento Primario Ad uso delle scuola normali e magistrali e dei maestri elementari*, by Luigi Bertagoni; *Guia Delle Educatore Foglio Mensuale da Raffaello Lambruschini*, o *Codice dell'intrusione Secondaria Classica e Tecnica e Della Primaria e Normale de 1859* de Torino, published in 1861, and *Manuale di Educazione ed Ammaestramento Pelle Scuole Infantili*, de Aporti, of 1833. To these we add texts from the *Museo digitali della scuola primaria italiana*. The declarations found in these texts do not assure the realization of rituals, however, since they are prescriptive texts, analyzed as discourses, by announcing how the ritualistic practice of schooling should be, they produce what should be a ritualistic practice.

The choice of these texts is based on ideas from which the West drank, those from epistolary Roman texts, from the expression of the discourse of human formation developed by the Greeks (Slortedijk, 2000), and from the inheritance of the Roman world, the taste for convincing and persuasion, thanks to the art of rhetoric and to the sermons of the Father of the Church, elements of our cultural tradition (Hámeline, 2009:52).

In a preface he wrote to an edition of Flaubert's book *La tentazione di sant'Antonio*, Foucault speaks of the nineteenth century and highlights what changed with the new place of power, where the fantastic that is born in books would settle. Now, "to dream, it is not necessary to close the eyes, it is necessary to read" (Foucault, 2010:137-138, our translation).

Another aspect to be considered is that in the nineteenth century practices of socialization of children in the family realm were substituted by public school institutions, which became consolidated as the place for the normalization of children as students. In this century, the term "Normal" was used to designate, beyond a state of organic health, the prototype of the scholastic – the subject educated in school (Canguilhem, 2009:175).

Rituals and performativity

The question of performativity as an effect of rituals worked with in some gender studies has benefited from the studies of Tambiah (1995). This author uses conceptual elements developed in the field of language by John Langshaw Austin, in the field of semiotics by Charles Sanders Peirce and in the field of structural analysis of language by Ramon Jakobson to reveal the relationship between ritual and language, that is, the functioning of language not in denotative terms, but in performative ones. Tambiah treats ritual as an amalgam or totality constituted by words, gestures, and discourses that concern the use of objects and simultaneous or sequential modes of use of various media, such as auditory, visual and olfactory ones, as well as modes of presentation such as song, dance, music and recitations. This amalgam has a performatic ritual effect, because rituals occur in the conjunction of semantic and pragmatic characteristics of thinking and action (Tambiah, 1995:22).

Effectiveness in the context of ritual comes from the power of the spoken word as Tambiah (1995) emphasizes. In a ritual context, words appear in prayers, spells, enchantments, canticles, blessings and other things. Tambiah emphasizes that these words are open to those who have the power to speak. There is a social relationship of power, an asymmetry in the order of ritual (Tambiah, 1995). Words have a preponderant role in the aesthetic content of ritual, whether in songs or in literary texts, highlighted by mantras and verses that are repeated. These texts function as

sacred words, at times secret ones, and are spoken to be heard, but not necessarily to be understood, or are recited out loud in the local language, to be understood. The two procedures – secret language and local language – can also be used when they are inscribed in purification rituals. The words are spoken in a context of a set of materials and the choice of these materials is not arbitrary. It responds to temporal characteristics and those of knowledge, such as size, form, color and strength. In his studies, Tambiah (1995) examines schemes of symbolic classification of the Trobriands, which confer a symbolic value.

Inspired by studies by Jakobson, Tambiah highlights metaphor and metonymy in the context of ritual. In the case of metaphor, the substitution of words or ideas in similar terms from a semantic perspective is a use that cannot be treated as a mistake, but as a moral use of language, which for him is similar to the analogy of attribution. Metaphor combines concept, action, word and gesture and for this reason contributes to performativity in a ritual context. With metonymy, the name of a thing is substituted by the use of an attribute, producing a complementary action. Upon analyzing Trobriand rituals, Tambiah observes that the use of metaphor allows abstraction, and the use of metonymy allows the construction of the whole through details, but mainly, they are accompanied by action, which also confers power to the ritual. He also speaks of the use of “substantial words”, “action words” or verbs. He offers as an example a list of words spoken in sequence, repeated in a ritual context as in the example: “The womb of my garden, Fertilizes, Swells, Spreads, Grows up high, From the nest of a wild chicken, Swells and presses, Rises like, The iron tree, Extends, Expands, Expands as if, It Awaits a child” (Tambiah, 1995:73, our translation).

The property of color associated to metaphor and metonymy is very important in ritual. Tambiah gives as an example the Trobriand society, in which the classification of gender became evident: when a woman became pregnant for the first time, there was a ritual of pregnancy and in this ritual the aunt on the father’s side would prepare two white fiber skirts and white coats to be used at distinct moments. The white represented the attributes of purity, the beauty of maternity, and sexual abstinence. The use of black by a woman after the death of her husband, as well as the shaving of her hair and rubbing ash on the body, is the inverse of the ritual of pregnancy. The color black represents sadness and her dark body is associated to the darkness of witchcraft. A man in an eating ritual is represented by the color red. The purpose the ritual is to transform an old and ugly man into a young fascinating and radiant youth. To do so he is washed with seawater, rubbed with leaves and coconut oil, and has his hair shaved and face painted (Tambiah, 1995).

Cosmology and classification are two elements highlighted by Tambiah for having a predominant role in rituals as action of performativity. Cosmology relates to structures of concepts and relations that work with an ordered universe, discerning it, in relation to space, time, matter, movement, population, of animals, men, gods, and spirits. The classification refers to a structured system that constitutes and labels any universe of things, beings, events, actions; it has cultural value, such as sexual division, religious, food-related and others. Classification is strongly involved with performativity in the ritual context, in verbal speech and metaphoric resonances of names, in the delimitations of physical properties and sensations in the parts of the body, in matrimonial ties, in presents, that is, in the group of elements that compose a ritual (Tambiah, 1995).

From the aesthetic perspective of ritual, Tambiah addresses dance, music, movement and emotion as elements present in ritual. Dance is often accompanied by song. Tambiah emphasizes that dance does not only put the body into play, the muscular system of a dancer, creating a physical tension, but also involves the dancer’s two principal senses, that of sight, which guides dancers in their movements, and hearing, which allows them to follow the musical tempo (Tambiah, 1995).

Hámeline (2009) characterizes rituals based on aesthetic quality: the elements of the space of the ritual in its function as a sanctuary, as a mystic space, and above all by the music. For Hámeline, song involves the mouth, the heart and intelligence, which represents a metaphor of the human being conciliated in its power (Hámeline, 2009).

Eco (1984) details elements such as incense, instruments of sound – atabaques [drums] and sumptuous chairs for the Ogãs he witnessed in a ritual in the city of São Paulo. Eco described a symphony of colors – white for Orixalá, blue and rose for Iemanjá, red and white for Xangô, yellow and gold for Ogum; and flowers, and statues in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Then, he shows how this

grouping operates in this ritual: “The father of the saint makes the propitiatory smoke, the drums attack with their obsessive rhythm, while a chant vocalizes the points, stanzas, [...] the initiated are mostly women” (Eco, 1984:130).

When analyzing ritual, language and discourse contain significant elements: the role of the officiants of the ritual, the relationship between the mythic time and the present reality, and the relationship of the myth in the ritual, according to Tambiah (1985). Not only the mythic time, but the myth as an element of a ritual in its relationship with the figures of language.

Myth, from the Latin *mythus*, has as a general meaning narrative, as in Aristotle. Myths produce different meanings through their use: a contrast to true narrative, an imperfect truth, and often combine with the attribution of moral or religious validity. Myth may be associated not to thinking, but to feeling, as an autonomous spiritual form in relation to the intellect. From a sociological perspective, myth is associated not to nature, but to society or to pre-logical thinking. In individuation as understood in the fields of sociology and anthropology, myth can be seen as a retrospective justification of elements that constitute the culture of a group to fulfill a function linked to the nature of tradition (Abbagnano, 2007).

Lévi-Strauss, in his *Structural Anthropology*, as Sontag (1987:97) indicates, defends the myth as “a mental operation, that is purely formal, without any psychological content or any necessary connection to the rite [...] the logic of mythic thinking is totally rigorous in relation to modern science”. He thus affirmed that there is a dichotomy between myths and rites, and even required “a study separating the two, to make myths the privileged means of access to the human mind. Rites are relegated to the execution of gestures and the manipulation of objects, the very exegesis of the ritual coming to be part of the mythology” [...] (Peirano, 2002:21).

The view of myth, as language, which Barthes reiterated in his *Mythologies*, in conjunction with the notion of ideology, is used in cultural analyses to denaturalize myth. For Barthes, myth as speech does not say just any thing but is a system of communication and in this sense it is important to recognize that the “myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way that it utters it: the myth has formal limits, however, not substantial ones. Thus, can everything be myth? Yes, I think so, because the universe is infinitely suggestive” (Barthes, 2009:199).

Edmundo Leach defends that there is no distinction between verbal and non-verbal components, approximating ritual and myth. He sees ritual as a complex of words and actions. For Peirano (2002), Leach approximated ritual too closely to myth, provoking a loss of specificity, and shows the importance of the contribution of Evans-Pritchard by emphasizing the need to observe that formal traits of myths or of rites are also cultural products resulting from distinct cosmologies.

Tambiah (1997), in an interview with Mariza Peirano, observes how myths relate with the effective actions of people, which are dialectical links that work in his anthropological analyses. For Tambiah, these analyses constitute a reanalysis of Malinowski in terms of metaphoric and metonymic associations, theory of information, and the inter-relations between myth-ritual (Tambiah, 1997).

Tambiah’s (1995) analyses of myth (inspired by studies of other anthropologists) have their specific inflections. For example, by reiterating the observation made by Malinowski that the Trobriand beliefs in relation to disease and death “form an organic whole”, he highlights the complexity and the inter-relations between different conceptions (Tambiah, 1995:309). In this way he highlights that myth has its value completed when it relates its internal standard to standards incorporated in other myths. In this perspective, in his analysis of *streghe volanti e canoe volanti*, he examines the myth by comparing mystical events (the actions of mythic heroes) with social norms from daily life. In the construction of a canoe, he observes two important facts: the construction of the canoe as a male activity and its male ownership; and the naming of the canoe as the “flying witch” because it is fast, aggressive and agile (Tambiah, 1995).

In the field of feminist studies, there is a fertile debate about myth. From Beauvoir’s *Second Sex* (1956), when she dedicates a chapter to show how in the relationship between men and women the woman is established as the Other, Beauvoir affirms that myth productively feeds this relationship. She indicates that: “A myth always implies a subject who projects his hopes and his fears towards a sky of transcendence. [...]so various, so contradictory that at first its unity is not

discerned: Delilah and Judith, Aspasia and Lucretia, Pandora and Athena – woman is at once Eve and the Virgin Mary”. She also indicates that the woman: “is an idol, a servant, the source of life, a power of darkness; she is the elemental silence of truth, she is artifice, gossip, and falsehood; she is healing presence and sorceress; she is man’s prey, his downfall, she is everything that he is not and that he longs for, his negation and his *raison d’être*” (Beauvoir, 1956:162-163).

Rituals and disciplinary practices

Foucault’s study about disciplinary practices associated to rituals provides a fertile path for understanding the ritualistic as performatic action. Foucault, like Tambiah, considered that rituals have a powerful force in the signification of objects and subjects in the world through their disciplinary effect. He examines rituals at various moments in his studies, whether to speak of the ritualized forms that surround solemn beginnings, or to address the control that a ritual of circumstance can speak of. Foucault recalls how the Greeks of the sixth century issued true discourse in the scenery of required ritual; he indicates how a moment arrived when true discourse would depend little on what it was or said, and examined how the truth “shifted the ritualized act of enunciation, effective and just, to the utterance itself: to its meaning, its form, its object, its relation to the reference” (Foucault, 1999:15).

When looking at *discours sacrés*, second century writings in the work of Aelius Aristides, Foucault presents dreams of ritual connotation of praises directed to the gods with a curing function. In the analysis of the techniques of the self of a Christian tradition, he highlights the ritual – *exomologêsis* – by which an individual would recognize themselves as a sinner and as penitent. He distinguished the stoic tradition from the Christian tradition by ritual. In the stoic tradition, the techniques of the self involve the examination of the self, judgement and discipline. In the Christian tradition, *exomologêsis* prevails, a practice of a rupture in which the penitent makes the truth about themselves appear. The *exomologêsis* is not verbal, it is symbolic, ritual and theatrical (Foucault, 2004).

According to Foucault, there is no skill that can be acquired without exercise, outside of ritual, even the art of living does not prescind an *askêsis* that should be undertaken as a training of the self for the self (Foucault, 2004). He observed that in Modernity, Christian asceticism substitutes Greek asceticism and influences educational practices in their formative action on subjects.

In his studies about psychiatric power, in 1973, Foucault (2015) identified two ritualistic practices; general ritual of the asylum and ritualization of language. The first is associated to the ceremonial presentation to the ill. In a ritual of demonstration of strength, the doctor shows the ill person that in the doctor’s presence the ill person should always have his head uncovered. The ill person must understand their position in the hierarchy of the asylum: obedience to the doctor. The second practice follows a bit like the previous one, however, another element operates effectively in ritual – language. The ill person must learn the names of those who have a type of authority function – doctor, assistant, nurse. In this ritual, the ill person is forced to recognize the disciplinary pyramid of the asylum through the learning of the name of these people. Also in the context of ritual of language, a ritual practice of reciting verses is found. This recitation must be done in the language that is learned in school, in the language of school discipline.

Foucault associates other practices to these rituals such as discipline and register. By analyzing these practices, he constructs arguments about how disciplinary power modulates the subject function.

In the 1970s, in his classes at the *Collège de France* Foucault referred to disciplinary power when he addressed a capillarity of power (Foucault, 2015), which took shape in medieval society within the religious community and through it was transferred, becoming modified in the secular community that developed after the Reform, between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Foucault indicates founding discourses of this disciplinary power: the discourses of the community *Fratelli dela vita comune*. This community was based on a certain number of techniques from conventual life and also from a certain number of ascetic exercises of the tradition of religious practice to define the disciplinary methods related to daily life and pedagogy (Foucault, 2015). He identifies in this community the genesis of the school experience of dividing students by age and level of development, and the offer of a progressive program (Foucault, 2015).

Pedagogy and discipline

The *Codice dell'intrusione Secondaria Classica e Tecnica e Della Primaria e Normale de 1859* de Torino, published in 1861, expresses how schooling is constituted as a mechanism for disciplining with orientations for the ordering of school instruction.

The practices of classifying students and organizing them in grades, appear with the institution of certain parameters for elementary instruction, such as: primary education, lower school; class, the number of students per class and per school; the sequence (primary, secondary, tertiary and fourth classes); graduation of knowledge by classes; classification of schools according to gender perspectives (female and male), space (rural and urban) and sociopolitical perspectives (public and private). This classification also applies to the subjects of education with their specific functions: master (teacher); student (apprentice), supervisor and inspector (controller of the educational process). Another example is ordering by age: "No one can be matriculated as a student in *lower elementary school* before six years of age or with more than twelve. [...] in rural schools, when conditions allow, with the approval of the municipality, students older than twelve can be matriculated, as long as they are not older than fifteen" (*Codice dell'intrusione Secondaria Classica e Tecnica e Della Primaria e Normale de 1859*, 1861:373, our translation).

There are collective subjects responsible for control, evaluation and accompaniment, like the superior councils and the provincial council. Each council has specific tasks, although with the general function of governing education in the municipalities. These entities, as well as the form of enunciation of school knowledge, are under the orientation of a specific legislation, which itself is an operator of social and cultural control of schooling. There is also specific legislation for the obligations of parents: measures for public schools; measures for primary schools; orientation for inspection; legislation for rural and urban schools; legislation for male schools and for female schools; municipal rules for schools; regulations about punishment; regulations against corporal punishment and the use of offensive words; legal guidance about the suitability of school space with definitions about health, lighting, tranquility, decency, and for classroom spaces and yards suitable for physical education. Economic aspects were also defined such as teachers salaries and that public education would be free of charge.

From the feminist and gender discourses, we understand that gender subjects are produced, even in these legal regulations, by a social and cultural normatization, as in the case of the indication of a female and not male teacher for the earliest classes because it was understood that women are more assiduous, patient, affectionate, and more refined and have better manners (*Codice dell'intrusione Secondaria Classica e Tecnica e Della Primaria e Normale de 1861*:370). This reveals the practice of control of knowledge from the perspective of gender and discipline, as in the articles of this regulation. Article 3^o stipulates: "In female schools, each day will be taught [...], the manual work of knitting and sewing, which are considered necessary for a well-ordered family, totally excluding the work of simple ornamentation." (*Codice dell'intrusione Secondaria Classica e Tecnica e Della Primaria e Normale de 1861*:373, translation ours). And in article 21: "For the female schools, each municipality will designate inspectors to supervise and direct female work and firmly maintain good discipline, according to the municipal superintendents (*Codice dell'intrusione Secondaria Classica e Tecnica e Della Primaria e Normale de 1861*:373, translation ours).

The selection of knowledge and its mode of distribution has as a reference the humanist discourse in defense of tradition of fixed culture, of knowledge as a given fact; of the religious principles and of civilized conduct, as well as the knowledge of Italian language, reading, writing, syllabication, orthography, grammar, calligraphy, arithmetic, mental calculations, about numbers and the decimal metric system; the responsibilities of men, geographical nomenclature; sacred history, religion, catechism, mysteries; hygiene; military instruction for male schools; and specific tasks for female schools.

The mechanism of schooling responds to programs suitable to each grade, to the regulation of required teaching; to the contents for male and female schools; to didactic materials suitable to the contents, and to didactic practices such as tests, lessons such as dictations, homework, correction of exercises. The meaning of the school cannot fail to be associated to the meaning of the "method

that, in its lay meaning, indicates how it adopts to attain a certain effect” (Bertagoni, 1876:21, our translation).

Disciplinary practices have an important role in the initiatives of government in the control of hygienization and in the health of the population. In reality, there is a new social experience with registrations, when writings about children and about the control of the subjects of education become stronger. Among these registers in the period analyzed stand out documents needed for registration: documents of birth; smallpox attestation; certificates of vaccines; certifications of promotion from one class to another; archives with registers of students; proof of attendance and promotion; annual register of exams; annual attendance and promotion records; annual records of exams; annual records of attendance; annual record of approval or failure; certificate of preparedness of teachers (*Codice dell’istruzione Secondaria Classica e Tecnica e Della Primaria e Normale de 1861:373-374*, our translation). The bodies, behavior, and social experience of people gradually entered into a web of writing, into a type of register that codifies and is available and accessible to consultation whenever necessary, according to Foucault (2015). For Foucault, the effect of this is a schematic and centralized individualization (Foucault, 2015).

Time and space are constitutive elements of disciplinary measures: the order of the school calendar with an indication of the beginning and end of the year, pedagogical time of the classes, organization of school semesters, dates of semestral exams, school vacation, civic and religious holidays. The civil and religious holidays at school serves as referents for the world view that guides the project of human education in this amalgam between the religious discourse and scholastic discourse, which is related with that which Tambiah calls cosmology in the ritual context.

The classroom: scene of the ritual

The educational practice takes place in a context of scenes of schooling. However, these scenes are understood in the sense given by Foucault, that is, not as a theatrical scene, but as rituals, strategies, battles (Foucault, 2015). Hámeline (2009) recalls that a scene is created, a suitable space, when a child recites. In this type of scene, what Bertagoni calls educational doctrine is important to the educational process. The lesson recited by the student, verbalized, has a significant value in the ritual of the lesson, given that it is in it that the educational function takes place (Bertagoni, 1876).

The rituals, as are indicated, involve various elements that as a group have a substantive effect on those that are involved in them: forms of symbolic communication, actions of repetition, the metalanguage that involves gestures, words, symbols that result in that which signifies a true mode of what it is to be in the world. As Tambiah affirmed (1985:139, our translation): “O ritual não é uma expressão livre de emoções, mas uma repetição disciplinada de condutas corretas”. This truth must be associated to various cultural artefacts. In the context of schooling, the curricular artefacts, the furniture and other equipment have a historical-cultural character of signification, even of gender, in the scene of the ritual. Some of these artefacts were produced for the school, such as booklets, calligraphy books, textbooks, school notebooks, pencils, pens, and cases to hold them. Others come from cultural practices such as maps, globes, portraits of the King, crosses.

Pedagogy gives the artefacts specific meanings and functions. In a ritual context, they can constitute elements of a ritual scene, as in the ritual of the lesson, the relationship of the teacher’s desk to the students’ desks indicates the function of the person who takes the class, that of the person who organizes the roll-call by gender, the relation of power, of truth. The images in the notebooks and textbooks are themselves discourses about the social and cultural subjects. These artefacts express a unique aesthetic that is expressed in the colors of the covers of the books and notebooks; in the religious images of the catechisms; in the prayers, recitations and enactments in religious lessons.

The crucifix and image of the King are recommended in the determinations for schooling in nineteenth century Italy. They are the two symbols that sustain the empire and order. According to Agnelli (1879:13, our translation): “The law establishes two symbols that should guide schools, the cross and the king’s portrait. [...] The Cross, the Lord. And the Gospel is the sole and true declaration of the rights of man. The cross represents all of this in school, [...] Along with this divine symbol is the human symbol, the symbol of society and of social authority, the symbol of the

homeland, of the nation, of independence: it is the portrait of the King”. Agnelli concludes: “Remove these symbols and the school becomes impiety and anarchy” (Agnelli, 1879:13, our translation).

Tambiah (1997) says about the amulets and images that these objects “like the saintly man, transfer their charisma to them, as these objects promote the conjunction between the saintly and the secular men, and how these objects are used and handled in historic, political and economic processes. (Tambiah, 1997:206). The presence of these symbols not only composes the ritual scene of schooling in its amalgam with the Christian religious ritual, but also emphasizes the value of the dictates of ritual and each specific ritual. This amalgam between state and Church appears in the daily lessons in schools, as in the example given by Aporti (1833:51, our translation): “Prayer to be recited in the morning before class. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. To the immortal and invisible King of the centuries, to the sole God honor and glory eternally”.

Ritual of passage: confirmation of gender identity

Foucault (2015) says that the family cannot be seen as an element of disciplinary power because it has a distinct mode of operating that is different from the disciplinary power that is sustained by the norm and has as spaces of operation the school, the hospital, work, and is submitted to the knowledge of the social sciences. However, Foucault recalls that the family is not residual to disciplinary power, it is essential to disciplinary power. After all, it is the family that assures compliance with mandatory schooling, that is, makes it possible for children to be individualized within the school system (Foucault, 2015:86). He shows the family in its two roles in the context of disciplinary power: one that fixes the individuals to the disciplinary system and another that articulates and causes it to circulate from one disciplinary system to another.

From the perspective of the *ritual of passage*, the family has an important role, because it is in it that this ritual begins from school registration, when the child is presented to school, accepts the rules and guidelines, negotiates the authority of the family with the school, identifies the school’s authority to educate the child, and confirms the identity of class, race, gender and religiosity of the child in that institution. The rules of the school are taken home, in a process that can be identified as schooling of the family, and there the child is prepared to go to school. It is the family that repeats recommendations about organizing school materials, notebooks and books, pencils, names of subjects, the school bag, the uniform. This ritual involves the smell of new books, the ink of the pens, the colors of the materials, the textures of the notebooks and books, the sound of the pages, a scissor cutting paper; gestures made by the movements of parents and children around the materials, the emotion, the expectation with the novelties of the school, the organization of the uniform. The process of desubjectivation of the child and the subjectivation of the student begins at home. Wearing the uniform involves a ritual through the unique meanings that this clothing expresses in the socialization process. Tambiah (1995) indicates how clothing has an effect of meaning in a ritual context, even through its communicative aspect. A student with a uniform and with school artefacts is a discourse of schooling. The student expresses the discourse of equality, of identity in the way that her or she affirms himself or herself as a male or female student. In the rite of passage, it is a discourse about schooling that associates the sense of belonging to values and morality. The colors, the model, the accessories, such as bows, neckties, socks, caps, gloves, indicate gender. They also indicate daily moments of school or solemn moments.

Ritual of welcoming: speak of oneself and recognize the authority of the Other

The ritual of welcoming operates through language, through discourse. Through language is learned a mode of presenting oneself with a name and family name, the order of speech, who speaks first and who goes afterwards. The name has as a focus the self-representation of the individual as a social subject (Rivière, 1996:115). At the beginning of the ritual, the orientation is that the teacher reads the names of the students in alphabetical order and the students respond by affirming, confirming. And, as in a military model, the guidance of the child in the space and order should continue:

Beginning today, that who is seated to the right, tomorrow that who is seated to the left, the day after tomorrow the one who the teacher indicates first and so on, I would say almost like the military, which behave similarly, where the need for order and discipline is so great (Bertagoni, 1876:75-76, our translation).

The ritual of order of space has us dialog with the work of Bueno (2012), who in her field ethnography *Girando entre Princesas: performances e contornos de gênero em uma etnografia com crianças*, presents scenes in schools for early childhood education that portray how daily rituals can reiterate practices of gender classification. In one of the scenes, Bueno highlights the organization of the class to watch a film with princesses: “the children take seats in the auditorium [...] but the seating [...] appears to establish a border between the nine girls seated in the front two rows and the eight boys seated in the row behind” (Bueno, 2012:75). This practice of organization of children’s bodies in spaces is performatic.

In the ritual of the lesson, there is an institutionality of who teaches and the authority to say the truth about the children and reaffirm what was said about the sex of the child at the time of birth. Foucault already affirmed the role of medical discourse beginning in the nineteenth century, as did Butler (2017:49) who said: “It is doctors who determine if a newborn is a boy or a girl”. Observes how a birth is a performatic moment.

But this authority of the use of the word, of the discourse in the ritual context of welcoming, also needs a familiar language, because it must use elements that can make sense to the child, mediate with the other discursive elements of the ritual; it is a game of language, in which the rule of the ritual is important, as Tambiah indicated (1995): ritual is needed to establish the authority of the person who commands, both the scholastic language and the familiar language of daily life. In this sense:

It is recommended that the first lessons be conducted in a way that is so familiar that the child believes that she has entered another family, amid a larger number of siblings. The teacher represents the mother, when she welcomes the children around her, begins to speak with them, as appropriate (Bertagoni, 1876:75, translation ours).

Rivière (1996) turns to Bourdieu to show how kindergartens and school materials become sanctuaries for rituality in the socialization of children, transforming childhood into a pedagogic period. In these sanctuaries, the children conduct their activities in a certain rituality, in the game of donation they learn to give, receive, retribute; through the ritual of approval and reproach, they learn morals and sociability and the recognition of the scales of domination and leadership (Rivière, 1996).

These processes continue and are re-elaborated in the schooling years. Other elements of the social dynamic enter in scene and from them gender relations are appropriated with the passage from the oral to the written, an element that comes to be constant in schooling. That is, children learn not only to decodify writing, but also to decodify cultural practices, through activities of a certain rituality, such as lessons. Lessons involve actions of repetition, rigid forms, stereotypes, myths in a temporal framework with rhythm.

Ritual of the lesson: attributes of the female and male

The lesson as a ritual is presented in a sequence, an order of activities, from the easiest things to the most difficult, analogy is used, as well as reading out loud, as recitation. The synthesis made by Raffaello Lambruschini (1842) provides an example of a ritual of a lesson. It is a lesson for a Venetian child who is in a school in Tuscany. The proposal has the following orientations: read well-written books, copy some of them, translate from Venetian to Tuscan with the help of the teacher, write the words that are easy to remember in a notebook; improvise familiar common Italian in narrative or dialog; repeat the narration made and revised by the teacher; read out loud and sculpt the syllable well, distinguishing the dual consonants and the more or less closed vowels; errors in writing facts are underlined by the teacher, in the lesson after the correction; make analogies

between the two languages, teach the use of the comma and period; write a narrative for the student to punctuate and for the teacher to correct later; tell a detailed story that can be considered important, then remove a word from it that can be repeated; the student translates in his language and is pleased with the school; then the verbs, repeating; by speaking, the child learns to speak with the women and with the people; give an example of great men; retell a story to another (Lambruschini, 1842).

In this didactic model, there is a lesson about male and female clothing. The use of the classification of which clothes are for a man and which are for a woman. For the use of men, a cap, hat, collar, tie; for women, hat, beret and veil. For the chest, the man uses a cloak, a coat, jacket, overcoat, a shirt; the woman, a belt, buckle, apron, ribbon, skin; for the legs, the man uses pants, underwear, shoes, boots; a woman, skirt, socks, shoes, slippers. There is in this clothing two artefacts with strong meanings as gender markers: the veil and the apron. The veil, in a Christian perspective, was always associated to moral aspects, religious values, in which women are placed in an asymmetrical relationship with men. The discursive memory of the declared use of the veil for women establishes a return to Biblical discourse, the sacred book of Christianity: ⁷ “Therefore, the man should not cover his head, because it is the image of the glory of God; but a woman is the glory of man. [...] ¹⁰ Therefore, a woman should have a sign of authority over her head, because of the angels” (I Corinthians 11:7, 10).

The apron is associated to domestic work, female work. For Raquel Eleonora Souza (2016), “the apron, “*grambiule*”, [...] brought from Italy, remained a characteristic of the settlers and regional harvest workers. Clothes in general should be practical for conducting domestic services (Souza, 2016:29). Over time, the apron became an important artefact in the wardrobe of girls in school.

The ritual of the lesson with the themes of History of Creation of the World and the Origin of Art and of the People, which are found in the *Manuale di Educazione ed Ammaestramento Pelle Scuole Infantili* presents the gender roles. It begins the lesson with the creation of the world by God from space, and nature, to man and woman, using a method of reading and questions in which the details of each moment of creation are repeated:

8°. On the sixth day God created Man: took clay and shaped his body and then blew over his face a spirit of life which is the soul. Man was thus formed of body and soul. God called the first man Adam, which means taken from earth. Questions. What did God do on the sixth day? How did God shape Man? What was Man made of? What is the name of the first man created by God? What does Adam mean? 9°. God made Adam sleep, took from him a rib and from this formed Woman and he blew over her face a spirit of life which is the soul. The first woman was called Eve, which means mother of the living. Questions. How did God create the first woman? What was the name of the first woman? What does Eve mean? [...] (Aporti, 1833:100, our translation).

It continues with instructions from God that prohibits them from touching a tree that has fruit that is forbidden to both Adam and Eve. And it then addresses disobedience:

12°. The Devil, who is an angel in rebellion against God, and who was expelled from heavenly Paradise, is jealous of the happiness of the first men, places a serpent to tempt Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, persuading her that she would become equal to God. Moved by this feeling of superiority, she ate it and seduced her husband to eat it; thus, from desire and pride is added the sin of disobedience to God’s order. Questions. What made the devil jealous of the happiness of the first humans? Who persuaded Eve? What made Eve eat the forbidden fruit? What is the sin that Adam and Eve committed by eating the forbidden fruit? 13°. Adam and Eve, by eating the fruit, feel shame upon seeing themselves naked, and upon hearing the voice of God, hide among the trees of Heaven. But God calls them and reproaches Adam for the sin committed; he blames Eve, and Eve blames the Serpent. God punishes all three. He curses the serpent who was the author of the sin, and says that he would become a Messiah, son of a woman, to save men from sin and triumph over it. He condemns the woman to live under the domain of the husband (before they were equal) and submitted her to multiple afflictions. To the man he said that he would work with fatigue and would eat the bread with the sweat of his face and that both the

man and the woman would be mortal. Then God expelled them from earthly Paradise, first dressing them with sheep skins. From the sin of Adam and Eve originate all the evils that afflict man in the mind, the soul and the body. Questions. What happened to Adam and Eve after they ate the forbidden fruit? What did God say to the first men about their sins? What did they say? What did God do? What sentence did he issue to the serpent? Against Eve? Against Adam? Against both? Were the first men expelled from earthly Paradise? What is the origin of all the evils that afflict men? (Aporti, 1833:99-101, translation).

This lesson presents the myth that the sin of Eve is in all women. The representations of this myth associate the woman as a morally fragile being, susceptible, a seducer, with a propensity to sin and to drag a man into her sins; associating sin to flesh, to lust and simultaneously to punishment, as in the pain of childbirth, the challenges of maternity and mainly in her dependence and submission to man. The patriarchal discourse was contemplated as problematized by Beauvoir (1970).

This lesson has us remember the argument used by Pontes (2018), when, upon analyzing a cultural pedagogy, that is, an educational process in the context of a beauty salon attended by children, indicates how the discourse of a model of woman and man, of a strong femininity or masculinity, is reiterated, whether in their homes or salons. Over time, the myth of the seductive woman is materialized in a feminine aesthetic based on care for beauty and the body. Practices that are naturalized as belonging to a supposed nature of woman, “as if they were predestined to fulfill certain rituals of beauty and hygiene”; at the same time, these issues of care for beauty are experienced by boys with another function, explained in the work of the author with the instigating question of one of the boys: “Are we going to get handsome for girlfriends?” The author concludes that “these ideas have a universalizing character about men and women. They even disregard the difficulties that many subjects feel upon having to fit their bodies into a certain standard of being and living” (Pontes, 2018:164).

The lesson involves rites, like that of hearing the reading of a text alternating with questions and responses in a particular rhythm. In the analysis of the lesson about the maternal instinct of animals, we can see that the master is oriented to provide: “Points to be presented, responded to and dialogued”. The points presented affirm:

The maternal love of animals reveals the concerns for natural conservation (preservation). Maternal love is more revealed in animals than in humans, natural care for conservation; although, in terms of these virtues, among the female gifts is the fine sweetness of affection, the sublime virtue of sacrifice, equally selfless, as found in animals. [...] Like the wolf and the birds. [...] Then the question: For what reasons and conditions does a bird's nest recall a family? (Bertagioni, 1876:105-108, translation ours).

In the patriarchal discourse, femininity is given mainly by the condition for reproduction, by the maternity that the woman carries within her as an essence, as a pre-existing condition. It links women to the idea of nature because of their reproductive action, in the imaginary of reproduction, maternal care for the natural being, with their action in the private, domestic realm, in maternity and particularly with the myth of maternal instinct. It is important to note that the myth functions because it is in keeping with the dominant social norm. The myth functions because it triggers the representations produced by the discourses about alterity. In this sense, women, like females in the animal world, have a maternal instinct as part of their nature. It is the feminine as a metaphor of mother nature. It uses the metaphor and metonymy to state the feminine attributes. By analogy, maternal love is related to mother nature. All of the characteristics given as female, that come from an opposition with the way of being male, serve as operators of gender classification, given that these attributes are repeated in other rituals of the lesson. The way that they are worked with as examples in the context of the ritual of lesson confers their effectiveness.

In the lesson in the native language, the action of using adjectives relates names of people to suitable attributes, as in this example:

1º. Given some names of people, recognize their characteristics. Pietro, Domênico, Andreina, Virgínia, etc. 2º. The teacher writes on a blackboard: ... is proud... is sweet... is diligent. [...]

Pietro is proud. Andreiana is sweet. Domênico is diligent (Bertagoni, 1876:171-172, our translation).

The attributes already indicated in other rituals are repeated: sweetness as a feminine attribute; diligence as a male attribute. This confirms that selflessness is a feminine attribute as seen in the previous lesson. The myths of femininity reverberate in the declarations of the lessons. The systematic use of the metaphor sweet woman refers to the sweetness of honey and fruits. Flavors and female attributes are common in the performatic language that associates sweetness and docility to attributes that suppose a way of being a woman in the world.

In the Sacred History lesson in male schools the teaching of biographies of the patriarchs is proposed, personalities who are distinguished by heroic virtues and actions. However, in the lesson in female schools, the examples should be more virtuous and illustrious women. From the point of view of the lesson itself, the New Testament is used with “the presentation of the main evangelical parables [...], to effectively impregnate in youthful souls the sense of responsibility that man has in relation to family and society” (*Codice dell’istruzione Secondaria Classica e Tecnica e Della Primaria e Normale de 1861:420*, translation ours).

In this same ritual of the lesson for women, it should be considered that:

Sacred and profane history offer a wealth of models of religious piety and obedience, of resignation, charity, from which one can obtain fertile material for both literary and moral lessons, without turning to themes very far from female life. Similarly, in arithmetic, in terms of examples that are foreign to female life, emphasize those that refer to home economics, the market, common work, and those related to family issues (*Codice dell’istruzione Secondaria Classica e Tecnica e Della Primaria e Normale de 1861:430*, translation ours).

The gender differences are located in actions associated to male identity that are linked to public space and those associated to the female are linked to domestic space. Male and female capacities are qualified in relation to knowledge such as arithmetic.

The educational text by Lambruschini (1842), proposes that education according for boys should emphasize: “Characteristics: strength, activity, solidity and resolution, correct use of liberty, free choice of vocation, respect for women, deep religiosity, clear, sincere; moderation of excessive positions, modesty with dignity” (Lambruschini, 1842:86, translation ours). For girls, education should emphasize the following characteristics: “assiduousness and ponderation, economy, sincere benevolence, discretion and correctness, modesty, love, piety, serenity of spirit, sociability, non-fanatic religiosity and simplicity” (Lambruschini, 1842:87, translation ours). This selection of female activities in the ritual context of the lesson is confirmed by the *Museo della Scuola*, which presents the social norm of what it is to be a woman from the perspective of knowledge and of morals. An education should focus on the following attributes: “Modesty, propriety, obedience to parents, clean and moderate clothes, engagement with domestic chores, charity, prayers, and include lessons about problems of arithmetic that involve calculations” (*Museo Della Scuola*, translation ours).

Final Considerations

The objective of the analysis presented in this article was to understand ritualistic practices of schooling as performatic apparatuses of gender, focusing on enunciations found in these rituals, but also on the relationship between practices of disciplinary and performatic ritualistic practices. The choice of the field of pedagogy because of its signification in the formation of humans, as a guide for children, was productive for this purpose because it involves norms, and didactic and religious precepts, and mainly because it presents the key element in the separation of the medieval world from the modern world – writing – which flourished in the humanism of nineteenth century Italy.

Schooling as a disciplinary mechanism has in rituals apparatuses for not only teaching and reading, writing and counting, but for teaching modes of being from the perspective of the male and female. Various cultural ritual artefacts enter in scene, utterances, repetitions, words, prayers, dialogs, questions and responses, symbols that, used by people with authority to pronounce, make

moments of welcoming, of lessons, and of evaluation, opportunities to intensify meanings of what is in the realm of daily life and of what they want to become true. Thus thinking and action are themselves the ritual for reaffirming myths such as: Eve, as the seductor, sinner, and therefore the sufferer and dependent; the maternal instinct; the sex of the private world, domestic – all in contrast to the male model. It is a powerful system, not because it oppresses, but because it is dedicated to, pays attention to, chooses and individualizes the subjects of male and female education. Its effectiveness is in its purpose, in its ordering and structure, and mainly because it presents itself under the domain of normalization of the human sciences that respond for the cleansing and health of the knowledges that influence eating and care for the family.

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