

**LIFE NARRATIVE OF MARIA FERNANDES DE QUEIROGA (SISTER ANA, OSF):
MEMORY, HISTORY AND TEACHING IDENTITY**

***NARRATIVA DE VIDA DE MARIA FERNANDES DE QUEIROGA (IRMÃ ANA, OSF):
MEMÓRIA, HISTÓRIA E IDENTIDADE DOCENTE***

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OSF): MEMORIA, HISTORIA E IDENTIDAD DOCENTE***

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to outline the path of construction of the teaching identity of the educator and religious Maria Fernandes de Queiroga (Sister Ana, OSF), who has worked for more than five decades in teacher formation, at Colégio Normal Francisca Mendes (CNFM – Normal Highschool Francisca Mendes), in Catolé do Rocha/PB, from a reading of her life trajectory and educational performance. Based on the ideas spread by the New Cultural History, in the investigative modes of (auto)biography, of micro-history and oral history, it is developed a historical approach of the sources constituted by oral history interviews, notebooks and writings of the educator, documents relating to CNFM, among others. Sister Ana has been building her teaching identity in welcoming, in the reflection and adaptation of the influences of the reference groups to which she has been linked throughout her life: the family, the religious congregation, the formative institutions and the place(s) of professional practice.

KEYWORDS: Teacher education. Teaching. Identity.

RESUMO: Este artigo objetiva delinear o percurso de construção da identidade docente da educadora e religiosa Maria Fernandes de Queiroga (Irmã Ana, OSF), que tem atuado por mais de cinco décadas na formação de professoras/es, no Colégio Normal Francisca Mendes (CNFM), em Catolé do Rocha/PB, a partir de uma leitura de sua trajetória de vida e atuação educativa. Pautados nas ideias difundidas pela Nova História Cultural, nos modos investigativos da (auto)biografia, da micro-história e da história oral, desenvolve-se uma abordagem histórica das fontes constituídas por entrevistas de história oral, cadernos e escritos da educadora, documentos referentes ao CNFM, entre outros. Irmã Ana vem edificando sua identidade docente no acolhimento, na reflexão e na adaptação das

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influências dos grupos – referências às quais esteve ligada ao longo de sua vida: a família, a congregação religiosa, as instituições formativas e o(s) lugar(es) de atuação profissional.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Formação de professoras/es. Docência. Identidade.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo tiene como objetivo esbozar el camino de construcción de la identidad docente de la educadora y religiosa María Fernandes de Queiroga (Hermana Ana, OSF), que trabaja desde hace más de cinco décadas en la formación de docentes del Colégio Normal Francisca Mendes (CNFM), en Catolé do Rocha/PB, a partir de una lectura de su trayectoria de vida y desempeño educativo. A partir de las ideas difundidas por la Nueva Historia Cultural, en las modalidades investigativas de (auto)biografía, microhistoria e historia oral, se desarrolla un acercamiento histórico de las fuentes constituidas por entrevistas de historia oral, cuadernos y escritos del educador, documentos relacionados con el CNFM, entre otros. Hermana Ana ha ido construyendo su identidad docente acogiendo, reflejando y adaptando las influencias de los grupos de referencia a los que ha estado vinculada a lo largo de su vida: la familia, la congregación religiosa, las instituciones de formación y los lugares de rendimiento profesional.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Formación del profesorado. Enseñanza. Identidad.*

Introduction

This article⁴ aims to outline the path of construction of the teaching identity of the educator and religious Maria Fernandes de Queiroga (Sister Ana, OSF), who has worked for more than five decades in the formation of teachers, at *Colégio Normal Francisca Mendes* (CNFM – Normal High School Francisca Mender), in Alto Sertão da Paraíba, from a reading of her life trajectory and educational performance. To this end, it is considered her commitment to the formation of teachers, through her performance as a teacher and coordinator of the CNFM Normal Course, as well as her continuous effort to keep the school functioning in the past and today, developing teaching activities and related to its administration, becoming, throughout this time, as guardian of confessional values and educational knowledge learned through the coexistence with several reference groups, especially the Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen, and the educator can still be described as guardian of the school itself and everything it represents.

The reconstitution of the educator's life trajectory, encompassing her formation and professional performance, took place from the analysis of oral sources, with emphasis on her

⁴ This text is an excerpt from the doctoral research entitled A GUARDIAN: a historical and (self)biographical portrait of Maria Fernandes de Queiroga (Sister Ana, OSF) – 1949 to 2019, carried out between 2016 and 2019, from the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba. To learn more, consult Barreto (2019).

own memory narratives, but also through written and imagery sources made available by her, such as notebooks, photographs, (auto)biographical texts and official documents of the college, as well as books about the city of Catolé do Rocha, about the history of the Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen, and even academic works about the CNFM.

It is worth considering here the complexity imposed on the study in question, given the impossibility of condensing a life into a historiographical narrative, regardless of the number of pages it may contain, otherwise, there is a risk of falling into the trap of a “biographical illusion”, which would be, according to Bourdieu (1986, p. 69, our translation): “to treat life as a history, that is, as the coherent account of a sequence of events with meaning and direction”. A life history, therefore, cannot be apprehended, it does not end in a narrative, and the researcher must assume a coherent posture when working the historiographical operation. In this sense, Oliveira also warns (2011, p. 66, our translation):

[...] How illusory is the figure of a subject of neutral knowledge, who observes the phenomena 'from the outside' on the assumption of apprehending them in their entirety in order, in the end, to build a definitive image on them. To completely determine the object would symbolize the arbitrary power of the subject of knowledge, but also the death of the object, hence the illusion that covers such practices.

Currently, under the influence of disciplines such as Sociology and Anthropology, there is an outstanding interest in approaches and methodologies that focus on life histories, identity and memory, in which (auto)biography points not only to the ability to present the trajectory of a singular life, but to enable a more accurate perception of collective processes. It is a meticulous work of understanding and interpretation, in which, from the sources and methods used, nuances of the studied reality are revealed. Therefore, for Le Goff, a biography initially starts from the life of an individual and the “legitimacy of the historical genre involves respect for this objective: the presentation and explanation of an individual life in history. But a history illuminated by the new conceptions of historiography” (LE GOFF, 1989, p. 49, our translation).

The investigation carried out in this work went through the dimensions of the person, the practice and the profession of the teacher, in agreement with the thought of Nóvoa (1992, p. 15, our translation), that: “The teacher is the person; and an important part of the person is the teacher”. In this sense, reflecting on the educational action of Sister Ana or on that of any other teaching professional requires considering the specificities inherent to her personal identity, which, therefore, particularize her educational activity.

The research subject

Tenth daughter of the couple João Adelino de Queiroga and Ana Fernandes de Queiroga, Sister Ana was born as Maria Fernandes de Queiroga, on 3 February 1936, in the city of Antenor Navarro (currently known as São João do Rio do Peixe), in the interior of the state of Paraíba. In 1941 she moved with her family to Catolé do Rocha, where her father would take a federal job at the Post Office and Telegraph. During this period, this small town was the scene of two unusual occurrences: the foundation of the Normal School Dona Francisca Henriques Mendes and the arrival of the five Franciscan Sisters from Dillingen, German nuns who would become responsible for the functioning of the school and for the formation of many young Catholics and of their geographical surroundings, who became teachers from it.

After completing the experiences of primary education and the Admission Examination, in 1949, at the age of 13, Sister Ana entered the Regional Normal Course at Dona Francisca Henriques Mendes High School, a period which she describes as follows: “What a joy! It was four years in which we were able to taste the nectar of the knowledge of various teachers, especially the Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen, founders of this educational institution” (QUEIROGA, 2016, our translation).

Since its foundation, the CNFM worked with the primary course and the Normal Course, in the early years called "Free Normal", a modality little discussed in the historiography of Brazilian education, but from which it is possible to infer that the designation "free" would be due to the autonomy granted by Brazilian legislation to the states to elaborate their own curricular matrices, among other prerogatives (SOUSA, 2012, p. 59).

From 1946 onwards, the Free Normal Course was replaced by the Regional Normal Course, being the first class of teaching conductors graduated in 1949, according to the Book of Minutes of the Major Sessions. This course was instituted in accordance with the Organic Law of Normal Education, put into effect by Decree-Law n. 8,530, of 2 January 1946. The two courses, Free Normal and Regional Normal have, therefore, specific features. For Oliveira (2013, p. 144, our translation):

The adjective "free" of the first would point to the principle of freedom of modern democracies, which, in the field of education, takes shape in the defense of the free initiative of individuals in education, and in the obligatory role of the State to regulate and control this activity, in public and private sphere. In turn, the adjective "regional" of the second would be meaning the circumscribed validity of the title issued by the Regional Normal, especially when considering the greater amplitude of the Normal

2nd Cycle and its right to claim access to the University, via the Entrance exam.

In the mid-twentieth century, Sister Ana was inserted in this context of teacher euphoria that moved the quiet town of Catolé do Rocha. Young normalists immersed themselves in different fields of knowledge, as well as in a dense range of sociocultural activities, as highlighted by Oliveira (2013, p. 148-149, our translation):

In the fifties, the Normal Regional do Francisca Mendes developed its formation with subjects of varied duration: Religion; Portuguese; Drawing and Calligraphy; Orpheonic Singing; Physical Education and Games (every 4 years); Math; Manual works (3 years); Botany; Physics and Chemistry (2 years); General Geography; Geography of Brazil; General History; History of Brazil; Psychology and Pedagogy; Hygiene; Didactics and Teaching Practice (1 year).

Sister Ana says that at the age of 14 she already felt called to religious life, however, she kept her desire to herself, as her mother did not like the idea. However, probably the direct contact with the founding sisters of the CNFM has deeply marked the spirit of the young woman, she does not give up on her intention and, at age 22, after receiving the approval of her parents, she enters as a candidate for religious vows, in the convent of Sand.

It is possible to affirm that, since 1949, Sister Ana begins, in fact, to build her bond with the CNFM, which lasts until the present day, when she continues to actively participate in the routine of the school, in pedagogical and administrative decisions, having held until 2017 the position of general director of the institution.

Building a high school or building a history

In the late 1930s, the foundations for the construction of a high school were glimpsed in Catolé do Rocha, which was configured for its creators and for local people, as well as for politicians, intellectuals and religious authorities, as a Redemptorist project, capable of bringing prosperity and civility to the region.

Many testimonies recorded in the Book of Impressions about the Project of Collegio D. Francisca Henriques Mendes⁵ reinforce these values, conceiving intellectual and moral development for future generations, as evidenced in the writings. According to Antonio Botto de Menezes, federal deputy from Paraíba at that time: “The work, which Col Antonio Mendes Ribeiro [...] will build, under the sweet invocation of his mother's name, in the municipality of

⁵ Document under the custody of CNFM. Non-paged manuscript, dated 1937.

Catolé do Rocha, to prepare the generations of tomorrow. It is a new and fertile seed reserved for the future [...]” (IMPRESSÕES, 1937-1938, our translation).

And with the then local vicar, Fr. Joaquim de Assis Ferreira:

The High School “D. Francisca Henriques Mendes”, Colonel Antonio Mendes Ribeiro's precious gift to the Diocese of Cajazeiras and to the city of Catolé do Rocha, birthplace of his mother who gives name to the School, represents for the Paraíba's Hinterlands an alms of light that cannot be forgotten [...] (IMPRESSÕES, 1937-1938, our translation).

The project for the construction of Colégio Dona Francisca Henriques Mendes came at a time of scarce resources for the education of the population, marked by the closing of schools subsidized by the government, which, with the Constitution of 1937, began to directly encourage private initiative, and minimizes the State's duty to education. In this sense, the text proposed that art, science and teaching be free to individual initiative and to the association or gathering of public and private people.

As the opening of confessional schools was of interest to the Church, from a network of local relations involving religious, political and economic leaders, the foundations of the building were laid, which would definitely change and mark the landscape of the small town in Paraíba and the part of the local community, considering that the less wealthy were left out of this project. It is worth highlighting the concept of sociability networks, which for Martins (2007, p. 432, our translation) would be “the representation of the continuous interactions of different individual strategies”. What would be, however, the main characters of this local network?

First, the successful real estate capitalist in the capital of Paraíba, Colonel Antônio Mendes Ribeiro, eager to build a work with which he could honor and immortalize the memory of his mother, the Catholic Francisca Henriques Mendes. In addition, the local vicar, Father Joaquim de Assis, who, in line with Catholic ideals of evangelizing through education, and paying attention to perceived needs in the region, indicates to the entrepreneur the construction of an educational center for girls as the ideal work for its purpose. And yet, the then mayor Natanael Maia Filho, a member of a family of the political elite in Catholics and Paraíba, who donates public land for the construction of the school building.

In addition to the family political culture highlighted as predominant in the city, in this context, the nationalist political culture is also perceived in the concrete behaviors of notorious or common individuals, after all, the construction of a nationalist feeling is boiling across the country. In the words of Pécault (1990, p. 15, our translation): “organizing the

nation, this is the urgent task, a task that belongs to the elites. [...] to forge a people is also to draw a culture capable of ensuring its unity”.

The history of the foundation of the school takes on a differential chapter with the arrival of the five Franciscan sisters from Dillingen who emigrated to Brazil in 1939, together with other sisters from their congregation, settling in the cities of Cabo Frio, in Rio de Janeiro, and Areia, in Paraíba. Due to the persecution of Catholic orders in Germany and the need to list leaders for confessional institutions in Brazil, Brazilian ecclesiastical authorities make the invitation, which is accepted by foreigners. The five German nuns who arrived to take over the functioning of the then School Dona Francisca Henriques Mendes initially settled in Areia (PB) and, summoned by the Bishop of Cajazeiras (PB), Dom João da Mata Amaral, headed for Catolé do Rocha, being welcomed by local authorities who even take care of their accommodation until the construction of the school building is completed and they can settle there, which happens in early 1940. According to Sendra (2007, p. 166, our translation): “While the School was still being built, the Primary Course worked in one of the houses provided by Colonel Sérgio Maia. And the Free Normal Course was installed in the completed part of the School”.

In this context, the story of many teachers trained at CNFM begins, who were able to develop their teaching practice based on the teachings of the five founding sisters or the Brazilian sisters who followed them and also embraced this task, the formation of teachers.

The constitution of an identity

The construction of identity, despite it being, apparently, an individual instance, is continuously processed in relation to a collective. It is, according to Pollak (1992, p. 200, our translation), “a phenomenon that is produced in reference to others, in reference to the criteria of acceptability, admissibility, credibility, and that is done through direct negotiation with others”.

At this point, it is worth reflecting on the influences that constituted Sister Ana as a subject, as an educator and as a nun, that is, on the constitution of her individual and collective identity. In this process of identity construction, the action of reference groups stands out (GABRIEL, 2011), especially the family, the Church and its religious congregation, among others, with an emphasis on the coexistence with the Franciscan founding sisters of the CNFM.

In her narrative, Sister Ana emphasizes that living with the masters, the founding mothers of CNFM, and the other teachers of the Normal Course at that school, awakened her taste for teaching. It is understood, therefore, that the construction of their teaching identity takes place, above all, from this coexistence, also considering their own collective interests at the time, after all, most young Catholic women aspired to pursue a teaching career, extolled by the authorities local political and ecclesiastical actions as an intellectual and, also, liberating and missionary action, as can be seen in an excerpt from the speech of Father Américo Sérgio Maia, official speaker of the seventh class of teachers at Colégio Dona Francisca Henriques Mendes:

Educating does not only mean accumulating knowledge but bringing to development and full efficiency all the faculties that are in germination in the child. The young teacher must be a bearer of the light of Jesus Christ, as a catechist, as an apostle of Catholic action (LIVRO, 1942-1959, p. 19, our translation).

Individual identity is built in communion with social identity. Thus, the subject, drinking from different sources, builds himself up, creating perceptions and making choices, often under the direct influence of other subjects or groups, which, in a continuous movement, can gradually rebuild himself, affirming themselves or transforming themselves, as the individual perceives himself in relation to himself and others. According to Pollak, in the construction of identity, there are three essential elements:

There is the **physical unit**, that is, the feeling of having physical boundaries, in the case of the person's body, or boundaries of belonging to the group, in the case of a collective; there is **continuity within time**, in the physical sense of the word, but also in the moral and psychological sense; finally, there is the **feeling of coherence**, that is, that the different elements that make up an individual are effectively unified (POLLAK, 1992, p. 200, author's highlights, our translation).

Regarding the identity of Sister Ana, it is possible to see the unification of these elements, a process solidified over her more than eight decades of life. Undoubtedly, in this movement, she receives and welcomes influences from different groups with which she integrates or lives, however she demonstrates a certain autonomy in her choices, considering the options available to the female figure in her social and educational space-time. Completes the Normal Course and decides to teach. At first, other work options appear, but she rejects them as they are not related to the chosen area. She decides for consecrated religious life at the age of 14 but faces her mother's objection. Even so, she remains firm in her purpose and at age 22 manages to enter the convent as a candidate, receiving permission from her parents.

Whenever asked about her choice of vocation, Sister Ana emphasizes personal desire and, more than that, considers having received a divine call. In her words: “*God attracted me, didn't he? God attracted me.*” She ponders, however, that the environment that surrounded her was favorable to her choice, as her parents were always very pious, the church being almost a complement to the home. She reveals that she admired the pious practices of the sisters, but makes it clear that they did not interfere in her decision for the consecrated life, as she reports:

[...] I made my decision at the age of fourteen and no one took it out of my head anymore, but I never told anyone. Then I finished here in high school and I was studying typing with Sister Engelsindis and one time, she was talking and my brother was already in seminary, and she asked me if I didn't want to be a religious. It was the only question. Then I couldn't hide it anymore, I was already seventeen, it was the first time I told Sister Engelsindis. Then later she passed it on to my sister and then she arrived at my house and there was crying at home. But I only entered the convent when I was twenty-two years old because my parents wouldn't let me. (QUEIROGA, 2016a, our translation).

Upon completing the Normal Regional at CNFM, she feeds the desire to teach there, which, however, does not materialize immediately. So, she starts working in commerce, a task that she didn't like. The opportunity arises to replace a school teacher who was pregnant, her neighbor Maria Celi Fixina, but, as the position was temporary, she returned to commerce in 1954 to help a brother who had just installed a men's clothing store. In the meantime, she receives other job invitations, but decides to refuse them for not identifying with the trades. Perhaps the family tried to integrate her in other occupations so that she could really confirm or not her intention for the consecrated life, after all, at the time, the path to marriage and the constitution of a new family was considered not only the natural for the woman, but also what is desired, given the strength of the representation of this institution in the social scenario.

Not that there was a determinism, that is, that Sister Ana was predetermined to be what she is, but at that time the woman, like the man, had a place defined within the sexual division. After all, for a long time: “each sex had its function, its roles, its tasks, its spaces, its almost predetermined place, in its details” (PERROT, 1992, p. 178, our translation).

In her narrative, the importance that parents gave to marriage can be seen, which, however, was not desired by all their children. Thus, it can be inferred that, with the possibilities that they have, each individual builds himself, at first, from paths and detours, choices and renunciations, as well as his own free will. As far as Sister Ana is concerned, there does not seem to have been an identity conflict in her life story; on the contrary,

elements point to an awareness, to an identification process, to finding oneself in the world, as a woman, as an educator and as a nun, based on what she receives and how she interacts in her context socio-historical.

In 1962, Sister Ana, then belonging to the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen in the Province of the North East, the Province of Our Lady Medianeira das Graças, returned from an intense period of preparation in Areia and settled at the CNFM, taking on the religious and educational activities entrusted to her, in a short time, teaching Mathematics in the gymnasium, Drawing in the gymnasium and in the Normal Course, Hygiene and Childcare in the 4th Regional Normal and Religious Education in the 3rd primary year. She says that it was not easy to take on all this work, as her formation was for primary school, but she emphasizes that she always had the support and guidance of the German sisters and that the fact that she liked what she was doing was fundamental to her success and your professional achievement. Parallel to carrying out the work, she also sought improvements, participating in courses focused on the area of Education, an initiative today called "continuing" or "permanent formation".

As there was a shortage of teachers to teach the different subjects of the high school curriculum in Paraíba, some courses were offered with the purpose of formation teachers and granting them the teaching record of the subject studied, which was done through passing the sufficiency exams⁶. In 1965, with the intention of obtaining the registration as a Mathematics teacher for the 1st high school cycle, Sister Ana held, in the capital of Paraíba, the 1st Intensive Preparation Course for 1st Cycle Teachers, promoted by the College of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters from UFPB, in agreement with the Secondary Education Board of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The course lasted for one academic semester, from 1 July to 1 December 1965. As she was already teaching Mathematics, with the end of the course and receipt of registration, she started to teach the subject with official certification.

Parallel to this course, she participates in another one held at the Institute of Education of Paraíba, lasting one week and aimed at teachers of the Normal Course. The course was taught by teachers from Belo Horizonte and, on that occasion, Sister Ana participated in the company of Sister Eleonore Brumm, one of the German sisters responsible for the administration of the CNFM. Then came the opportunity to take a more in-depth course in Belo Horizonte, in 1966, offered by the National Institute of Pedagogical Studies, through the

⁶ The sufficiency exam was an emergency measure adopted by the Ministry of Education and Health (MES), through Decree-Law n. 8,777, of 22 January 1946 (BRASIL, 1946), with a view to minimizing the gap of teachers to work in secondary education, given that the number of Philosophy colleges, specialized in the formation of teachers for this level of education, was insufficient in the country.

João Pinheiro Regional Educational Research Center/Teacher Improvement Division (CRE-DAP), a course which is always referred to by her as an important moment in her professional formation, giving her, according to her words, a theoretical-practical deepening “*similar to that of a specialization*”.

From May to December of 1966, she dedicated herself to the teacher improvement course given in Belo Horizonte, taking several subjects, with workloads ranging from 12 to 137 hours, in a total of 847 class hours, including studies in Didactics Mathematics (discipline with the highest number of hours), Social Studies Didactics, Natural Sciences Didactics, Teaching Practice in the Normal School, Curriculum and Supervision in Primary School and Educational Psychology, among other areas of knowledge. In this experience, Sister Ana was able to interact with the teaching professors of the various disciplines and with the participating professors, who, like her, were in search of theoretical deepening to work in their professional spaces.

The course held in Belo Horizonte - MG enabled him to teach all the Didactics of the CNFM Normal Course, as well as the Teaching Practice and also the pedagogical guidance work she carried out at this school and at the 8th Supervision Center (linked body to the Department of Education of the State of Paraíba) of Catolé do Rocha, as coordinator of the teaching supervisors, from 1977 to 1980. In this pedagogical orientation work, she emphasizes the partnership with Gercina de Freitas Lopes, teacher to whom she entrusted the regency of Didactics of Mathematics in the CNFM pedagogical course and who also participated in the evaluation process of the teachers in the supervised internship at the institution.

The process of building a professional identity, according to Moita (1995, p. 115, our translation):

It is a construction that has a spatio-temporal dimension, crosses professional life from the phase of opting for the profession to retirement, passing through the concrete time of initial formation and the different institutional spaces where the profession takes place. It consists of scientific and pedagogical knowledge as well as ethical and deontological references. It is a construction that bears the mark of the experiences made, the options taken, the practices developed, the continuities and discontinuities, both in terms of representations and in terms of concrete work.

In this sense, it is clear that Sister Ana is gradually giving shape to her educational praxis, assuming new professional functions, delegating attributions to other collaborators in the field of teacher and educational formation, developed not only at the CNFM level, but

even in the state network of education. She makes use of the knowledge acquired in the formative spaces at the same time that she goes in search of new knowledge and professional updating.

From the Belo Horizonte course, the educator keeps, in addition to the certificate, a notebook of almost 300 pages handwritten in front and back (QUEIROGA, 1966). The first page, in keeping with their religious identity, has a prayer towards the beginning of the work; the others contain notes on the teaching units of the various subjects taken, encompassing historical and theoretical aspects concerning each area, teaching methodologies, assessment, teacher preparation, child readiness for learning, lesson plans and fixation exercises, among other notes, including highlighting the importance of dialogue between disciplines, a concept currently called “interdisciplinarity” and of great prominence in contemporary pedagogical theories.

In 1971, Sister Ana was invited to teach Mathematics in 1st and 2nd Scientific classes at State High School Obdúlia Dantas. Hired by the state, she performed this function until 1973, when she passed the entrance exam at UFPB to study Pedagogy. She gets her contract with the state transferred to the State School Sesquicentenário, located in João Pessoa, where she teaches Mathematics for four years.

Doing Pedagogy was the crowning achievement for the exercise of his professional practice. At the academy, according to her, there were excellent teachers and there was a lot of knowledge sharing based on group work. She recalls that, when the time came to carry out activities on the theme "work units", she had the differential of having already exercised the content during the course held in Belo Horizonte, which was much easier for her than for other colleagues at the graduation go through this stage of the program, even becoming the coordinator of the group.

During the formation in the Pedagogy course, Sister Ana never abandoned her work at CNFM, not even mentally, according to her. The guidance of the teachers of the Normal Course was a priority for the educator, so at all times she was present at the school. When there were classes or days off, she would go to Catolé do Rocha to teach classes in the Normal Course and provide guidance to the teachers in formation.

Sister Eleonore Brumm, at that time, was responsible for the administration of the CNFM, but she was also provincial, that is, she had been elected to coordinate all the sisters of the province, in this case, the Northeast Province, Franciscan Province of Our Lady Medianeira das Graças. Thus, she was divided between the demands of the college and the obligations of the religious order, but had the direct help of Sister Ana, above all as a

collaborator in the work of guiding the teachers, but also as a teacher of various Didactics of the Normal Course.

Upon completing the Pedagogy course at UFPB, in December 1976, with qualification for School Administration, School Supervision and Pedagogical Practice, she received the registration conferred by the Technical Teaching Inspectorate of Paraíba to teach Educational Psychology, Educational Sociology and General Didactics. In January 1977, Sister Eleonore Brumm handed over the administration of the CNFM to Sister Ana and moved permanently to Areia, after 38 years of effective work in that educational institution.

From the educator's reports, Eleonore Brumm's commitment to prepare Sister Anne to continue the line of educational and confessional work established by the group of German pioneer sisters, the Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen, of which she was a part, is evident. Sister Ana's dedication to this task is also clear, working hard, receiving counseling and putting into practice the teachings arising from this coexistence. The processes of construction of the professional identity of Sister Ana as a teacher, supervisor, coordinator and school administrator, as well as the processes of construction of her personal identity as a woman, religious and even as guardian of the CNFM, have the mark of many groups, but also of individuals in particular.

Regarding Sister Ana, it is possible to affirm that all this time of dedication to education and to the CNFM has proved to be fruitful, in the sense that she acquired experiences and learning, at the same time that she collaborated with the formation of many teachers, who were, for their own curiosity, but also from the knowledge acquired in interaction, building new knowledge inherent to educational practice.

From 1962 to 2015, the period when Sister Ana worked in the Normal Course at CNFM, according to enrollment data obtained from the school's secretariat, they were students⁷ or received guidance from the educator on screen 1,345 teachers trained at the institution. There were 53 years of dedication to teacher formation that generated a significant result, as shown by the number, which exceeds the thousand.

Analyzing the sources, it is possible to affirm that there was a great deal of pedagogical knowledge transmitted by this educator. From the elaboration of teaching units and care with consistency between syllabus, objectives, methodologies and learning assessment to the preparation of teaching resources so that teaching could prove more attractive and efficient. The resourcefulness in the administration of classes during the

⁷ According to data collected at CNFM, six male teachers completed the Normal Course at CNFM throughout its history.

supervised internship period was another point that deserved attention and guidance from Sister Ana and the other teachers responsible for conducting this stage.

Taking up education was for Sister Ana more than taking up a profession, it was taking on a mission, according to the precepts of her religious order – and maybe that's why she still has not allowed herself to stop. Her scientific effort is visible, the continuous search for knowledge that would subsidize its action, being able to reflect on it from the assertion of Freire (2007, p. 22, our translation): “if my commitment is really with the concrete man, with the cause of its humanization, of its liberation, I cannot, for that very reason, dispense with science or technology, with which I will be instrumenting myself to better fight for this cause”.

Teacher education and Christian education have always been a priority for her, as can be seen in her reports, in the testimonies of other subjects or in the analysis of sources. This is not to say that she has never made mistakes and perhaps even left a negative mark on some of those who went through her. She herself, in a self-evaluative perspective, relevant to every educator, is perceived as follows: “[...] no one is so wise that there are no mistakes, I think. I cannot say that I do everything good, we have our faults, they are human faults” (QUEIROGA, 2017, our translation).

Since its foundation, in 1939, the CNFM has offered training for teaching: initially with the course called “Free Normal”, then with the Regional Normal, both corresponding to what is now conventionally called “basic education”. In 1965, with the implementation of the Pedagogical Course, formation began to correspond to high school education and, from LDB n. 9,394/96, with the change in the nomenclature of the teaching levels, it was configured as a Normal Course in medium level, with a requirement of four years of professional formation. The new curricular matrix of the course started to require a workload of 4,560 hours/class, with the obligation of a regency of 320 hours/class. For this, the primary school teachers at the school would have to give up a lot of time in their classrooms. Committed to the mission of formation of teachers, and aware of the social importance of this formation, Sister Ana made an effort to maintain the Normal Course, adapting it to the new requirements. To this end, in 2005, she conceived the “Flor de Mandacaru” project, which aimed to solve the problem of conducting for the trainees of the Normal Course, providing them with the necessary professional experience and also opening the doors of the school to accommodate children from of the less favored classes.

Thus, classes were opened at the school to attend to the children included in the described profile, whose parents were informed about the project's specificities upon

enrollment. According to the proposal, the trainees would be accompanied by a full professor in each room, who would provide educational and psychological support to the course participants. The elaboration of the teaching units was accompanied by the pedagogical advisor, who was also responsible for observing the execution of the classes, carrying out a critical evaluation that favored the teaching performance of the interns. The Flor de Mandacaru project ran from 2005 to 2013, having been closed, according to Sister Ana, due to the lack of adhesion of new candidates to the Normal Course and, also, its high execution costs.

With the attempts exhausted, Sister Ana finally noted the lack of success in keeping the course functioning at the school due to the low demand and lack of interest of the students. The narrative expresses a disenchantment, after all, formation for teaching is imprinted on her own identity, and this no longer happens to other subjects. According to Sister Ana, there is a movement of discredit, and consequent decline, of teaching in the current situation, and this has consequences: in the near future, there will be a shortage of elementary school teachers, the so-called multi-purpose.⁸

From the heyday of the Normal Course, Sister Ana keeps many memories. She also remembers, with nostalgia, her performance with classes full of students, the various implementations made over time, how she liked to teach... Her memories bring to light a past exhausted in the present, but that makes up her history, the history of the school, the history of the many teachers formed in that school.

Final considerations

The path taken in this work went through the recesses of the identity constitution and continued in its objective of understanding the life trajectory of Sister Ana as a person and as a teaching professional and, from this trajectory, to enter into the knowledge of her educational praxis, problematizing it and contextualizing it to the elements that appear in this process; whether it is the influence of the socio-historical context of her formative time; whether it is the influence of the reference groups in her life and practice (family, Church, student and religious groups, Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen, among others); whether it is the imbrication relationship with the CNFM; whether it is still its own process of search and self-

⁸ Denomination referring to teachers in the early years of elementary school, responsible for teaching the basic subjects of the school curriculum: Portuguese Language, Mathematics, History, Geography and Science. Although the expression “multi-purpose teacher no longer appears in current Brazilian legislation, teachers in this education sector, in practice, continue to act as multi-purpose” (PIMENTA *et al.*, 2017, p. 17).

formation.

Some questions arise in view of the key point of how a person becomes a teacher or how their pedagogical action is influenced by the specific characteristics assumed in the course of each particular life. The answers, however, do not come without considering, or rather, without analyzing the identity processes of each subject made teacher.

Sister Ana, as an educator and a nun, brings and reflects in her actions the marks of the education received within the family, in the years of schooling experienced, especially at CNFM, and in direct contact with the Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen, founders of the educational institution. Responsible for the formation of a number of teachers that surpasses the thousands, she developed a praxis that had and has a reach beyond the boundaries of her place of work, given that many students formed in the CNFM migrated or still migrate to different cities in Paraíba and even from other states, taking with them the values and learnings built in this educational experience and disseminating them among other social subjects with whom they interact

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