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**Domestic Education in Nineteenth Century Brazil:  
Aspects of European Influence on the Performance of Tutors  
and Private Teachers**

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# **Domestic Education in Nineteenth Century Brazil: Aspects of European Influence on the Performance of Tutors\* and Private Teachers**

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## **Abstract**

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In Brazil, the nineteenth century was the period in which domestic education, or home education, became widely practiced by the elites, particularly in the capital of the Empire of Brazil. The home was where the elite educated their children, by means of tutors and private teachers. The tutors were either male or female masters who lived in the family residence, hired to educate the children and youth of the home. The private teachers were those who gave lessons "in home", in the ABCs or specific knowledge, at pre-established times and days. Centered in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the study attempts to demonstrate the discussion and practices which prevailed in domestic education, copied from European models that greatly influenced Brazilian education. The sources investigated encompass, especially, newspapers and magazines of instruction and education and those meant for families and women. It may be concluded that the model for domestic education was impregnated by circumstances and a mentality of a time and a society that saw itself in European standards and that, slowly, left the final remains inherited from the colonial period, seeking the statute of an industrial capitalistic society.

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**Keywords:** domestic education, tutors, private teachers, european models, nineteenth century Brazil.

# La Educación Doméstica en el Siglo Diecinueve en Brasil: Aspectos de la Influencia Europea en la Actuación de los Tutores y Profesores Particulares

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## Resumen

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En Brasil, el siglo XIX fue el período en el que la educación doméstica, o la educación en el hogar, se convirtió en una práctica generalizada por las élites, especialmente en la capital del imperio de Brasil. La casa era el lugar donde la élite educaba a sus hijos e hijas, a través de preceptores, tutores y profesores privados. Los preceptores eran maestros o maestras que vivían en la casa familiar, contratados para la educación de niños y jóvenes de la casa. Los profesores privados fueron los que dieron clases particulares "de casa en casa", de las primeras letras o disciplinas específicas en días y horas predefinidos. Centrado en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX, el estudio pretende demostrar la discusión y las prácticas imperantes en la educación nacional, copiando modelos europeos que ejercieron una gran influencia en la educación brasileña. Las fuentes investigadas incluyen, sobre todo, los periódicos y revistas de educación y formación y los destinados a las familias y las mujeres. Llegamos a la conclusión de que el tipo de educación estaba imbuido de circunstancias internas y de la mentalidad de una época y una sociedad, que se refleja en las normas europeas, y, poco a poco, en el abandono de los últimos vestigios heredados de la época colonial, alcanzando el status de una sociedad capitalista industrial.

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**Palabras claves:** educación doméstica, preceptores/tutores, profesores privados, los modelos europeos, Brasil decimonónico.

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Domestic education was a method of teaching diffused through its use in the education of princes and nobles and implemented throughout centuries, with the same characteristics, in different contexts, dated from different epochs, from the XVI to the XIX Century.

In Brazil it is in the XIX century that this practice acquires its greatest importance, allied to the statute of modernity and civility originating from the countries considered as references, principally those of Western Europe.

Based on foreign models, the practice of educating children at home, conceived as domestic education, was a recurring form of education for the upper classes in Imperial Brazil, undertaken by tutors or private teachers, known as “house masters”. The tutors lived in the homes of their pupils accompanying them not only in their daily lessons, but also in routine activities, such as masses, promenades and others. On the other hand, the so-called private teachers visited the homes of their pupils weekly, on certain days and times, giving classes from the ABCs to specific subjects. The length of time in this form of education varied, and the master himself attested to when the pupil was ready to take examinations or to conclude his instruction, or even when the family decided it was time to dispense with the master’s services.

In accordance with our other studies (Vasconcelos 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009), from the first few decades of the nineteenth century, in Brazil, the most common way of hiring tutors and private teachers was through advertisements placed in the newspapers of that time, in which both the services of masters for domestic education were sought and the masters themselves offered such services.

Taking into consideration a sampling of the major periodicals between the years 1839 and 1889, such conduct may be inferred to last throughout the entire XIX century, changing only in the denomination, requirements and quantity of the existing supply and demand. Initially, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the advertisements required “a lady”, “a gentleman”, “someone who teaches”, “a person”, even registering an advertisement which was looking for “anyone”, so long as he is “over 40 years old” and “writes well” (January 18, 1839. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 4).

As the solicitation was general, the characteristics are what described

the end to which the position of “a lady” or “a gentleman” was destined, since it was generally required that they present excellent conduct, age, family independence, be single, among other attributes demanded from those who were responsible for the education of children in Brazilian families.

Beyond the “worthy conduct” ever present as a characteristic of these occupations, from the second half of the nineteenth century on, qualifications became valued, being recorded in some advertisements as “a man of good conduct who is qualified to teach”, however, the references as to personal condition were maintained, especially for those “elderly and of good habits”, “a married man of 40”, “a competent foreign lady”, or “prepared to teach”. Thus, requirements such as “to have the necessary abilities” as well as “to have the required attributes” (January 16, 1849, *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 3) are also placed.

Combining individual behavior, social status and qualifications, advertisements placed in periodicals can be observed to increase throughout the period studied, noting that this form of education was being expanded in number of users, accompanying those other movements, which were taking place, especially, the increasing importance that instruction was acquiring in the nineteenth century.

As the growth in the number of families who sought domestic education for their children increased, there also occurred the institutionalization of that practice which developed its own codes of fulfillment and, among them, may be highlighted the significant participation of women, competing with men for the same employment opportunities as tutors and private teachers in the homes of the Brazilian elite.

In this sense, it is then possible in the 1870s to mark the beginning of the supremacy of women in functions related to domestic education and thus a decline in the number of advertisements placed for men in these functions, particularly for private teachers, for, in private teaching, the predominance of women was already noticed from the previous decade, only women applying for teaching positions and residing on plantations and in the homes of their students. This fact, in Brazil, is borne out by the nature of the functions carried out by the tutors, since they needed to live together with the families of their students, as well as become

intimate in their master's homes, these characteristics being more appropriate for feminine than masculine work.

Private teaching, therefore, was a practice constantly carried out by women, a tendency that lasted throughout the period and was still present on the eve of the Brazilian Republic.

The functions and attributes of these individuals so common in the nineteenth century become confused with the day-to-day literate women, especially foreigners, who were the majority in such occupations.

### **Tutoring as a role for Brazilian and foreign women**

The characteristics of domestic education practiced by the elite and found in numerous sources, permit the affirmation that the hiring of women as tutors was commonplace, in Europe as well as the transfer of this model into Brazil. Moreover, the performance of women in private teaching is quite significant, being one of the few occupations acceptable for those who had no one to support them and needed to work outside of their homes. Even so, only those women who had received some form of education were the ones who could apply for these positions, since extensive learning was required by parents avid for educating their children in the molds of nobility and aristocracy.

As to these conditions in Brazil, there opened up a field of privileged work for foreign women or Brazilians who had just arrived or come back from Europe, since the simple fact of being a foreigner or having lived in Europe seemed to be sufficient condition to become a female tutor, and, in addition, in analyzing the criteria established for the supply of services, there was to be seen a difference in quality in having a foreign tutor or one fluent in those languages most appreciated by nineteenth century Brazilian society.

There are even registers of many foreign women whose support in Brazil derived only from their work as tutors. As to the nationality of private teachers, it does not seem important to inform the country of origin, since the condition of being a foreigner in Brazil was enough, finding various advertisements of the kind "a foreign lady, with qualifications having a few hours available" (January 04, 1869. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 2), "a foreign lady recently arrived from Europe"

(January 06, 1869. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 3), “a foreign lady with much practice in teaching”. Even so, among the applicants who offered themselves as tutors, there were registered, in the period analyzed, Germans, French and Swiss.

Contrary to the nationality which was not always explicit, the moral conduct of the tutors at this time was closely observed, probably due to it being one of the few professions acceptable for women and placing them in intimate contact with the contracting family. Thus, information relative to the moral and social condition of the applicant for tutor is asked for as that of “attesting to her moral capacity” or “requiring the best recommendations”.

Tutors called themselves teachers and some of them, toward the end of the nineteenth century, in offering their services to the newspapers, presented their abilities as ranging from that of “a teacher approved by the council of public instruction” and by the ‘Academy of Fine Arts’ (January 01, 1879. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 6), “a teacher approved by public instruction and by “the ‘conservatory of music’ (January 09, 1879. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 4), and “with a letter from the public instruction to teach” (January 03, 1879. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 6), to “a long practice in teaching, having studied in Paris” (p. 7).

Despite the recurring nomenclature of teachers, the majority do not inform us how and where this title came about, seeming that this is attributed to all those who are involved in the education of children and young people.

Another differential in the hiring of tutors was the social position and the wealth possessed by the elite for whom they had already worked. Thus, an excellent reference would be recorded as "a governess with a diploma to teach and with abilities, teaches French, English, Portuguese, piano and other educational subjects, a lady who for some years taught in the home of a respectable Brazilian family" (January 06, 1869. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 3), or even, "a teacher approved by the council of public instruction, having taught in the best schools and homes of important families, having free time accepts pupils"(January 14, 1879. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 6), and "a foreign governess, who for four years taught the daughters of a distinctive family, who had left for Europe, desires employment as a governess in the home of a family of

rank in this city or the countryside" (August 27, 1887. *A instrução publica*, n. 3, p. 8).

Time spent as a tutor also seems to have been an attraction for those looking for such services, since succeeding advertisements informed the age of candidates for the position of private teachers or tutors of families, demonstrating that, the older the candidate, the better qualified for the performance of these functions, taking into account that those over 30 were considered "middle-aged". There were offered, from this perspective, "a lady who has taught for quite some time", "with a lot of practical experience in teaching", "an occupation that the same lady has carried out for many years" (January 04, 1869. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 3).

The preference for foreign women was also related to ethnic questions in a slave-owning country, since not all candidates who applied for such a position could be considered able to educate the children of wealthy families in Brazil, as can be noticed in two advertisements as being essential for the applicants to the position of tutor to be white: "any widower with children, who is in need of a white widowed lady, very competent" (January 22, 1839. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 4) and "he who needs a white lady, to teach some young girls to read, write, count, sew, embroider, mark and cut, or even to take care of the home of some small family" (January 14, 1839. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 4). It is also to be noted, in another advertisement of that period, that an "English lady" is required to "to take care of and stroll with a one year old child", these duties normally were referred to in advertisements intended for the purchase or sale of female negro slaves (January 10, 1839. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 4)

Beginning at the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, advertisements for domestic education multiplied and, consequently, making this practice more accessible not only to the elite who were already doing this, but also to intermediate classes who were also able to use these services. However, domestic education seemed to be an indispensable practice for the Brazilian elite. In this period, there was a social differential to education given in the home. In this way, those whose children went to some school, or those who educated their children themselves, eventually needed the services of a tutor. Such is attested to by the advertisement of 25 January 1849, in which "a foreign



lady, competent, qualified to teach English, French, piano, singing and drawing, to complete the education of a young girl at one of the plantations of this province” (January 25, 1849. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 4).

Employing themselves to “educate” young boys and girls, mastering the diverse knowledge required for such and holding a position coveted by foreigners who came to Brazil, the tutors could not be denied a place recognized as privileged in the existing social structures. Nevertheless, there was a very tenuous threshold between respect and recognition of one’s social position and the condition of housemaids of the elite, treated as such. In this way, one can notice preoccupations on the part of tutors, ensuring that the place they occupied in the house and the treatment they received from their employers was guaranteed. It is what is observed in the following advertisement: “a widowed teacher, of exemplary conduct, desires to go to some school or plantation near the city, or to the home of any Brazilian widower of good conduct, small family of a good social position, as a governess: her only demand being to be treated with distinction” (January 03, 1869. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 3). Furthermore, in the request recorded: “a qualified lady needed for a plantation in the county of Parayba do Sul to teach young girls, one who knows how to play the piano, sing and work with a needle and is guaranteed good treatment” (January 14, 1869. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 3).

As to the knowledge taught by female tutors, it should correspond to the desires of the family who hired them, which forced the applicants to those functions to have a wide range of knowledge and abilities, in order to satisfy the educational expectations of the elites. The parents were the ones who chose, among the subjects considered for education, those most adequate to their interests to be given to their children.

Thus, in all the advertisements observed throughout the decades of the nineteenth century, in only a few cases is there a coincidence of subjects taught by the female tutors, since the combinations are the most diverse and relative to the abilities of those who taught. With the exception of Portuguese and French, which were almost always present in the lessons given, the other knowledge taught varied among the areas considered important to the education of boys and girls, considering, doubtless, the specifications for each genre.

For domestic education, in the most diverse combinations, from 1839 to 1889, besides, “the ABCs” and “elementary education”, – characterized as the teaching of writing, reading and sums –, teaching of Portuguese and French as priorities, followed by Latin, English, German, Italian, Spanish, handwriting, literature, composition, religion, music, piano, scales, singing, fiddle, Portuguese, Latin, French and English grammar, logic, mathematics, geometry, arithmetic, algebra, accounting, business bookkeeping, physics, botany, universal history, Brazilian history, geography, drawing, painting and watercolors.

For the girls, there was specific knowledge to be learned such as embroidery, sewing, marking, cutting, dancing, needlework, gold, silver, tinting and fish scales casting, knitting, crochet, flower arrangements, costume works, cutting of upholstery, velvet and other manual works.

As to the specifics of teaching given to boys and girls, the editorial entitled Public Instruction (*Editorial Alambary Luz on A instrução publica, 1875, ano IV, n. 19*), criticized women’s education, principally that given at home, for in the author’s point of view it was insufficient for the needs of women, as it already was for that of men. In addition, the writer called attention to the fact that women ought to educate women, as well as men ought to be educated by men “because the laws of nature demanded such, because certain sexual affinities demanded such” (p. 138).

The author even criticizes foreign teachers, tutors and governesses, stating that the “Brazilian woman should be educated by the Brazilian woman”, since people have their own individuality that cannot be forgotten and opposed “without going against their temperament, mood and character”. In this respect, a “modern writer” condemns the use of foreign tutors, not only because of cultural and linguistic differences but also because this practice, one among so many, is “the excessive Brazilian habit of copying France”. According to the writer, added to these criticisms is the fact that there were no Brazilian compendiums, since “all the compendiums are in a foreign language”, which caused “the student who is not fluent in a foreign, language or who even knows little of it, not to understand what he studies” (p. 138).

In Brazil, the contact established between parents and tutors was informal, based on a pre-established agreement, most of the times made

verbally. Therefore, it was very common to dispense with their services at any time, as also the teachers to give up their work. To guarantee staying in their homes until the end of their teaching, at times this agreement had to be defined previously in the employment advertisement, as in the following example: “TEACHER. A teacher is needed who is willing to work away from the city, **making a long-term contract**: the teacher must know the Portuguese language well; inquire at 49 Hospicio Street, at noon” (Janaury 29, 1879. *Jornal do Commercio*, p. 4 - my italics).

The turnover and discontinuity of educational services at home also can be verified in the tutor Ina Von Binzer’s report (1994): “It is truly fortunate that no contracts are made here, nor are breaches fined. Even when constantly threatened to be dismissed any day, at least we can pack our bags when we think things have gone too far” (p. 90).

The methods for the education of children at home were also not uniform, those being decided by the women tutors. However, the parents approved of these practices and, at times, interfered in their implementation, based on prejudice, on taste, or simply having as a guide the “routine” of the use of those most appreciated at the time.

Furthermore, the foreign women tutors also brought from their countries of origin the disciplinary methods, principally the moral ones, most appropriate for education. However, sometimes such methods did not produce the desired effect, either due to the cultural differences existing between masters and pupils, or to the erroneous interpretation of the purpose of such procedure, inducing them to opt for the old habits. This is what the tutor Ina Von Binzer (1994) relates in one of her

I cannot get accustomed to this superficial teaching; but, when I begin to go deeper it is even worse: I become totally discouraged. As to discipline, my goodness! Just the mention of this word makes my blood curl. Imagine this: the other day, upon coming into the class, I found them very restless and noisy and in my confusion I resorted to Bormann. When I got enough silence to be heard, I ordered: “Stand up, sit down”, five times in a row, which in our country is considered shameful for a class. But, here – oh! Saint Simplicity! -, when I explained to them what I expected from them, the children were so far from imagining that that was a punishment, that they thought it was a good game and they jumped up and down like a

bob, up and down, like robots, having great fun. Grete, since then Bormann has been definitely discarded, for me, here in Brazil. I do recognize that it is indispensable to adopt a teaching methodology here, but one that should be Brazilian and not German, based on Brazilian models and adapted to the character of the people and to the conditions of their domestic life. Brazilian children, definitely, should not be educated by Germans; it is a waste of time, since the grafting of a foreign plant to which the Brazilian youth is subject will not grow here (p.87).

Domestic education and, especially, tutoring undertaken by Brazilian women and foreigners, with their knowledge, methods, and posture, as demonstrated so far, was a recurring practice in nineteenth century Brazil, remaining so with the growth of private schools and of the state public school throughout the entire nineteenth century and even beyond.

Copied from examples given by royal families, it may be stated that education in the homes of the elite, in modern life, has its origins in nobility and it is in this class that it is officially maintained for a longer time, until being finally substituted by the institutional schools. And, in this sense, it seems to have been a practice impregnated with the characteristics that they had in other contexts, where the initial model comes from, brought to Brazil, especially, from European countries.

### **The European influence on the tutoring model in Brazil**

In the European context, tutoring emerges as a category about which there are many reports, allowing for the affirmation that it was an effective and recognized practice of education and instruction for children and young people at home, as well as a professional activity acceptable for men and women.

Since the education given by tutors took place at home, it may be stated that its essence, occurring in the private sphere, favored the feminization of domestic education, considering the great number of tutors who lived in the homes of their pupils.

The fact itself of living in the homes of their employers already made the condition of tutoring more appropriate for women and preferably for those who were single, in accordance with the standards of that time.

Additionally, this was one of the few paid and socially acceptable functions, even in Europe, that could be performed by women before the nineteenth century. According to David (Araujo, 2000), the female tutors who taught boys and girls in middle class and upper middle class homes already represented a considerable sector of the workforce in Europe in the nineteenth century, counting more than 30,000 people employed in this function. The number of this type of advertisement for employment in the daily newspapers, like the Times, in the 1840s, was around one hundred per day (Araujo, 2000).

The objective of the home, in domestic education, by means of tutors, was principally to “assure a stable position in marriage”, when it came to daughters, and to further prepare them so as to be capable of raising their own children, even educating them if they wanted to or if circumstances obliged them. Also, having a companion of a certain cultural level for the husband and a “good manager for the house” influenced the husband’s choice of a wife. That is, it was the responsibility of the tutors to prepare, in the private sphere, the requirements necessary for women in the public sphere.

Among the foreign tutors, preferred in representing a symbol of greater social “status” for the families, the Germans and the French<sup>1</sup>, besides the English, predominated; caricatured by Sophie Deroisin (1997), in the book *Petite filles d'autrefois*:

What to say of that damned race, opportunely vanished, the governesses? Throughout the nineteenth century to around the war of 1914, children were the priority of the lunatic English, the ruthless Germans or the hysterical French. Miss, Mademoiselle, Fraulein, a rich procession of maniacs and ‘ghosts’ – or better, poor creatures with no skills, nor destiny. Sadism, cruelty seem to develop endlessly surrounding “poor rich girls”. From all the delegations of power this is, without a doubt, the most odious that can be reproved in the mothers of the past century. We have heard little of female tutors, sometimes perverse, or sometimes incomparable for their humaneness or for their political energy (...) (p. 129)<sup>2</sup> .

Contrary to Deroisin (1997), whose representation of the tutors is undeniably bad, Araujo (2000) states that these women were seen as contributing to a more rational and sound education for young women in

a century that began the creation of new social codes. However, the same writer also reinforces the negative evaluation of activities carried out by the tutors:

It is the lack of a reflective culture and of a creative practice that transpires in the words of Caeli (...) to characterize the quality of the work they develop. It is possible that Caeli is principally referring to the Portuguese tutors, since in another novel she demonstrates her preoccupation with the necessity of creating an institution for the education of tutors (1892). The foreign tutors, these, are at times feared, as much by Caeli (...) as by Maria Amalia Vaz de Carvalho (...), as being a threat to the “national culture” of the homes of the middle class (p. 121).

In some novels, the tutor is remembered with nostalgia and respect, for being, probably, the only person with whom the young girls talk to or share some intimacy. The fact of their being foreigners, coming from countries considered at that time more civilized, gave them a certain credibility, in the sense of seeming more lucid and knowledgeable of innovations and tendencies yet to be divulged far from European cities.

Nevertheless, there are also numerous reports, especially biographies, of sadism, perversity and attitudes even of torture to which children were subjected, principally, noble children, under the care of tutors, or, still, “governesses” who in the wealthier families were those who coordinated the education distributed among the various tutors.

The immobility of the feminine “hardness” in exercising the function of tutor is a constant in the reports which endured throughout the entire nineteenth century in Europe, with practices that did not change, being marked in 1810, 1890, 1905, or 1913, in similar depositions. However, although in smaller numbers, there were also proven stories of admiration, gratitude, and affection, showing that the day-to-day of the tutors and their pupils was pervaded as much by fear, hate, scorn and melancholy as by love, joy and wisdom.

The tutors were almost exclusively responsible for their pupils. They should save the mothers from any worry. According to Deroisin (1997), the parents knew what was going on between the children and their tutors, but in some way all excesses were excused by the unquestionable

theory at that time that “the children are difficult and governesses and tutors are necessary to educate them, but, especially to transform them into “great individuals”.

The mothers approved of the attitudes of the governesses, believing them to be “good pedagogical principles”, principally when applied by experienced foreign tutors. Thus, the tutors were sovereign in the education they applied to the children under their responsibility. According to reports of the governesses themselves, they did no more than strictly apply the orders received. However, they had the liberty to aggravate them or interpret them based on their conclusions, mistrust or reflections, since they spent more time with the children than with the parents and they believed to know them better.

The women who worked as tutors were almost always placed in a social class inferior to that of their employers, even though possessing a cultural capital acquired from a careful education, possibly in a more advantageous past in which, at times, they themselves had had various tutors. In some cases, they were young women born from illicit relationships for the society at that time, whose parents made strong efforts to give them at least an education; since not being recognized as legitimate daughters, they did not have the rights to a dowry or an inheritance.

The remuneration for the services of tutor in the European context, while they were exclusively employed by the elite, seems to have been satisfactory for the standards of the class that could hire them. Nevertheless, the personal services and talents of the tutor needed to correspond to this remuneration.

The European bourgeois society at that time conceived as a demonstration of wealth and “nobility” the having of a tutor for the children, principally the daughters, as did the traditional and noble families. Such “fashion” went so far as to become nonsensical in some situations, considered as an attitude of the “new rich”, whose objective seemed to be, only, to imitate the habits of the aristocracy. Some families, in the attempt to approximate the education of their children to the education of noble children, kept, besides a head tutor – a type of governess who coordinated all the education -, other “adjunct tutors”, responsible for specific subjects to be taught.



The curriculum to be taught by the tutors, in this context, as in Brazil, was quite varied, since it followed what was in “fashion”, held as important, as well as the knowledge, tendencies, and tastes of the master herself.

The postures and habits of the nobles were copied and admired by the others, becoming the parameter of what should be taught to children by their tutors. The competition between knowledge and “gifts”, to be acquired set the tone for what was to be learned.

Carvalho (1905) relates that:

Sometimes they came into Martha’s room and said in a fit of anger: I want to know German. Mariquinhas knows German, and I don’t. I want to learn how to embroider, Julia painted a picture that I don’t know how to do. Such was how they were getting ahead in their studies. Martha sweetly conformed to the desires of the pupils: she taught then everything she knew, but what she could not do, was to inculcate into them the interior life that animated and coordinated all of her acquired or intuitive knowledge (p. 206-207).

To attend to the necessities of the tastes of the bourgeois, tutors needed a rather complex education, which, as previously noted, they had probably not received for the intention of just getting a careful education, since, in most cases, they were illegitimate young women from wealthier families, or impoverished due to varying circumstances, or even daughters of religious “masters” who had prepared their education. Be it from the different situations described or from others, in some way the tutors were caught up in the condition of having to sell their “knowledge” in exchange for a salary and, at times, even for a place to live. Certainly this was not a function for which one prepared or desired, but, on the contrary, something somewhat humiliating, to which they were hopelessly trapped and which did not present any other option.

According to Araujo (2000), the tutor is “typically a single woman, widow, or even married, in extreme situations, “coming from the impoverished middle class, someone who is confronted with economic difficulties, in contrast with the material conditions that she had benefitted from in infancy” (p. 123).



As for the tutors who came to Brazil, like Ina von Binzer, the most well-known of them, who arrived here in 1881, hired by a family from the Province of Rio de Janeiro, it may be inferred that another stimulus for the exercise of tutoring besides the vicissitudes already described was the adventurous spirit, the desire to know other cultures, as well demonstrated in the reports of this young teacher in Brazil in the nineteenth century. In spite of this, it was also taken into account the fact that they had a profession inappropriate for women; it would be better then that this happened far from the European society of which they were a part.

Therefore, the institution of tutoring as a recognized form of education, quite diffused among the European elite, indicates that there were many women who worked in this area, despite negative repercussions.

In the analysis of the reports, what is also learned about tutoring is the incapacity of some mothers to teach their daughters satisfactorily. Since, being prepared, the mothers themselves would be able to choose to take over the education of their children.

Referring to the education of children and young girls, the European novels of the nineteenth century are full of characters as tutors, especially female tutors, whose references are greater in number than those of the institutional school. It is probable that the choice of characters was due as much to the high number of tutors, greater than the number of teachers from the institutional schools, as to the ideological representations of the bourgeois middle class, who consisted of readers and characters of which the novels dealt, with “for whom the situation of women, acting in the “domestic sphere”, was “better” than that of a salaried teacher, who needed to work outside the home. According to Araujo (2000):

Why were there so few tutors as principal characters in the novels of this period? This absence may be related to the social and ideological conditions in which writers produced their works: their survival was dependent upon the interests of their readers who were more interested in romantic love stories than in the complex world of work. In addition, the elementary teacher was burdened with the “stigma” of having to work to survive, as being perceived as an

independent woman, an idea that was against the ideals of femininity widely accepted at that time. (p. 126).

Not without considering the fact that domestic education was already practiced in noble families for many centuries, it may be reiterated that these tutors in the nineteenth century are the first “officially” instituted educators, who made of their “doing” a remunerated “professional activity”, representing the opening of the market for intellectual work for feminine occupation, supplying the “new” needs for education which were presented by the rising European bourgeois.

Nevertheless, despite being a recognized and rather common activity, tutors commonly ended up in nursing homes, as a consequence of their lack of parental support during their lives, due to their being orphans, abandoned or impoverished. At times, upon the death of their parents or husbands, they found themselves alone and unable to maintain a home, which obliged them to look for an occupation, which would also provide them a place to live. Tutoring was the best way out in these cases, however, the duration of this work was limited by the growth of the children they were hired to teach. Once the work was over, they were no longer needed in the homes, and therefore sent away, with the exception of some cases in which they were able to attend two generations in the family. Once dismissed, they had the option of looking for another position or if they became ill or suffered from any psychological problem, then not having the equilibrium to begin again the life of an educator in another home, obliged them to admit themselves to some rest home or charity institution.

From the “occupation” of tutors, the “profession” of teacher is born. Only that the professionalization will demand abilities for which some were not prepared and others resisted for fear or the impossibility of acquiring them.

Upon a revision of tutoring, especially in a sampling of how it was in the European context, the influence that such practices had in neighboring countries is perceived, among them nineteenth century Brazil, where the foreign models were exhaustingly copied.

Especially in relation to France, one may state that a significant influence on the habits, fads and tendencies in nineteenth century Brazil, as exemplifies the tutor Ina Von Binzer’s report (1994), upon her arrival

in Brazil:

There seem to be almost no Brazilians who do not speak French, although some of them possess only a vague notion about the country to which this language belongs, even ignoring that there are some other small cities besides Paris. In the head of the negro woman who waits on me – my negress – Paris corresponds to everywhere outside Brazil. As I realized her unlimited admiration for this fantastic thing which is Paris and where I come from, I took care not to discredit the city and the competency of her citizens, with my eight- day- old Portuguese (p. 18).

Among the uses and customs copied from France and implemented in Brazil, one finds tutoring itself, as indicated by the article entitled Education, written in the *Album Litterario* - an instructive and recreational periodical journal of 1860. In this article, the writer who signs the article with the initials or pen name IESY, observes the incessant imitation that in Brazil is made of France, calling attention to advantageous things that should be copied from that country, such as the use by families of tutors:

When a nation copies the customs and uses adopted by civilized countries, it gives an exuberant proof of love to civilization, and its first attempts are steps which it takes firmly on the road to progress. Therefore, far from becoming fed up with seeing everyday Brazil trying to imitate France, this great center from whence universal civilization derives, it is with pleasure, and not without patriotic sentiment, that we already see introduced in our country, other than vain uses, advantageous uses. It is not our intention to speak of how much Brazil imitates France: time is lacking, and, what is most essential, the lack of precise knowledge to deal with such a serious subject, as this is on the study of customs. We only intend to deal with one of these civilizing light rays, (...). We intend to speak of the female tutor (p.2).

In speaking of the tutor, the author of the article cited states that this French custom should be more advantageously used in Brazil. The reason for such statement, explains the writer, is the “pernicious” and even “dangerous” use adopted by Brazilian families of turning over the education of their children to nannies, almost always slaves, who,

through contact from infancy, would record onto the children their first impressions, thus causing them harmful defects, that could only be modified much later. Among other harmful effects of this system of bringing up Brazilian children, the writer emphasizes the “corruption in both language and society”. According to him, France, England, Germany and other countries protected themselves against these negative effects by the acquisition of “governesses”, giving to “lady maids of education” the duty of educating their children, freeing them from the pernicious influence over children as well as the contact and day-to-day life with “servants” of no social knowledge, ignorant of the uses and customs which are the principles of civilization.

Upon reflection, the author points out that this habit is changing and "already some homes in our society, understanding the beneficial results that could derive from the introduction of tutors into the family, have trusted the upbringing and education of their children to virtuous and honest maids". These, according to him, are "competently qualified for the delicate task of social upbringing". The article finishes emphasizing that, evidently, this is a "very appreciated use and worthy of imitation", which, "even though it consists only of a trial in the society of 1860", certainly, "later will become a dire necessity, a necessity that becomes more sensitive the greater and better developed the civilization of the country is".

Thus, the practices of domestic education analyzed in the European context give some clues regarding the influence that this model exercised in Brazil, in a scenario predominantly inspired by foreign models, whose agents were also primarily outsiders, acting on knowledge acquired in other realities and having as referential works, treatises and documents of a rather diverse content from the day-to-day Brazilian reality.

### **Final considerations**

In 1884, the tutor Ina Von Binzer returned to her country and later wrote her memoirs as an educator in the homes of Brazilian families, by means of letters in which she narrated her daily experiences in this function. The tutor's reports are a portrait of the circumstances that

involved the performance of these women teaching other women, with quite differentiated cultures and knowledge, whose work consisted of a feminine occupation that had as principal protagonists foreign women and, in smaller numbers, Brazilian women.

However, the tutor Ina Von Binzer's leaving also coincides with another historical report that could signal the affirmation for the option of schools that, little by little, had been seducing the elites. In the year 1887, in the diary of the Viscountess do Arcozelo, a coffee plantation owner in the region of the Vale de Paraiba, in the Province of Rio de Janeiro, the dismissal of the tutor to her children is reported, when her husband decides to send her two boys to study at a school located in Pati do Alferes<sup>3</sup>. "Castro today told Miss. Sarah he did not want the boys to continue studying at home and that they would go to the school. She said that, in that case, she would move to Rio". Seven days later, the tutor's departure is recorded, "Miss Sarah left at 5:30, I felt very sorry for her". The increase in the number of private schools and the emergence of the public school pointed to changes that would shortly occur, both in the political scenario of the country and in their reflections on education and, among these, there was the emergence of mandatory schooling that would remove, domestic education and its principal agents, female tutors from their long occupied place. Their voices and practices which had been brought, many times, from faraway countries, influenced, greatly, Brazilian education.

In spite of this, the fact that education at home, and especially, tutoring exercised by literate women, still continues as a practice by the elites in the country, coexisting, for the entire nineteenth century, with the private schools and the emerging state public school persisting even during part of the twentieth century in the wealthier classes or in distant regions and presenting different forms depending on the situation, place, and social position of the users.

## Notes

\* The word tutor is used in the sense relative to the functions of preceptors, housemasters, governesses and private teachers.

<sup>1</sup> According to Araujo (2000) this conception is related to the similar situation of the other countries.

<sup>2</sup> Free translation by the author.

<sup>3</sup> The diary of the Memoirs of the Viscountess do Arcozelo relative to the year of 1887. Historical Archives of the Imperial Museum, days 14-21 of May, 1887.

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