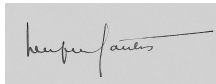


# Delfim Santos

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Delfim Santos

<b>Full name</b>	Delfim Pinto dos Santos
<b>Born</b>	6 November 1907 Oporto, Portugal
<b>Died</b>	25 September 1966 (aged 58) Cascais, Portugal
<b>Era</b>	20th-century philosophy
<b>Region</b>	Western Philosophy
<b>School</b>	Continental philosophy · Onto-phenomenology
<b>Main interests</b>	Philosophy of Education Ontology Epistemology History of Philosophy - Greek, Western and Ph. in Portugal and Brazil
<b>Notable ideas</b>	'Pluriverse' Regions of Reality Philosophy as Aporia
<b>Signature</b>	

**Delfim Pinto dos Santos** (Oporto, Portugal, 1907 – Cascais, Portugal, 1966), was a Portuguese philosopher, author, pedagogue, University professor and occasional book and movie reviewer.

## Life

Delfim Santos was born in Oporto, Portugal in 1907, to Arnaldo Pinto and Amelia dos Santos Oliveira. His father was a goldsmith and trained him for such craft, which Delfim successfully practiced as an apprentice until the death of his father, occurred when he was aged only 15. Still under the impact of his recent orphan condition, the young Delfim kept the family business running for a while, only to become fully aware that his vocation lied elsewhere, and thereby start answering an inner call for a lifelong engagement with study and intellectual quest. By that time too he had converted from a non-religious upbringing to Protestantism, and became an active member of the cultural and sportive activities of the Portuguese YMCA.

By 1927, aged 20 (quite late according to average standards) he completed high school and enrolled in the University of Oporto Faculty of Arts graduating in History and Philosophy in 1931, being one of the last students of this famous school, closed by the Government shortly after. He had Leonardo Coimbra and Teixeira Rego as his mentors during his student years and other famous students of this Faculty included Agostinho da Silva and Adolfo Casais Monteiro.

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Immediately after graduation he started a career as high school teacher, first in Oporto, then in Lisbon, where he made his *aggregation exam* required to become a teacher in Portuguese high-schools. Having applied to a fellowship to study under the guidance of Martin Heidegger at Freiburg, he was awarded against his will a similar position in Vienna, Austria where he settled by October 1935 as a fellow of the Portuguese Higher Culture Institute, to study under Moritz Schlick, Karl Bühler and Othmar Spann, attending some of the famous Vienna Circle seminars, and writing his critical study on Logical Positivism entitled *Positivism: a critical reappraisal (Situação Valorativa do Positivismo)* which he presented as his two-years fellowship final report. During the Winter Semester of 1936 he visited Berlin to meet Nicolai Hartmann and Eduard Spranger. Finally, he completed his critical survey of neopositivism by moving to the UK and study with John Macmurray in the University College, London, and with Charlie Dunbar Broad<sup>[1]</sup> and George Edward Moore at the Trinity College (Cambridge), where the neopositivists had another stronghold (in 1939 the later was to be replaced by Ludwig Wittgenstein<sup>[2]</sup>, a former prominent member of the Vienna Circle).

By mid-1937 he returned to Portugal for a short leave and was summoned to take the position of Portuguese Language Lecturer and Director of the Luso-Brazilian Institute at the University of Berlin, a position he was actively seeking in order to become familiar with Phenomenology. There he attended regularly the seminar classes of Nicolai Hartmann, studied the work of Martin Heidegger, whom he was among the first to introduce to a Portuguese audience in his 1938 essay *Heidegger and Hölderlin or the Essence of Poetry (Heidegger e Hölderlin ou a Essência da Poesia)*. Meanwhile Delfim received his PhD in 1940 from Coimbra University presenting a thesis on *Knowledge and Reality (Conhecimento e Realidade)*, and returned to Berlin, where he was to remain until 1942, the year in which he permanently resettled in Portugal.

In 1946 he attained the position of Assistant Professor of Pedagogy at Lisbon University, submitting his essay on *The Existential Foundations of Pedagogy (Fundamentação Existencial da Pedagogia)*, considered his most influential work among Portuguese and Brazilian educators and teachers, published in Portugal that year and in Brazil in 1952. In 1950 he became the first full Professor of Pedagogy in Portugal. Among other subjects, he taught on History of Ancient Philosophy, History of Education, Ethics and School Administration. He also taught Psychology during several years in the Portuguese Military Academy.

Delfim attended numerous international Philosophy congresses and symposia, namely the 9th International Congress of Philosophy - Descartes Congress, Paris, France 1937, the 10th International Congress of Philosophy - Amsterdam, Holland 1948, the 1949 'First National Philosophy Congress' in Mendoza, Argentina, organized by the University of Cuyo<sup>[3]</sup>, and the 1st International Philosophy Congress of Brazil, São Paulo, Brazil, 1954, organized by Miguel Reale. He also took part in some of the celebrated Eranos seminars in Switzerland. Under his guidance a *Center for Pedagogic Studies* was created in 1962 by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, of which he became the Director until his early death, occurred in 1966, aged 58.

He was member of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences and exchanged personal correspondence with international scholars such as Mircea Eliade, Constantin Noica, Hermann Hesse and Michael de Ferdinandy. One high school and several streets were named after him in the Portuguese districts of Lisbon, Evora, and Matosinhos (Oporto).

## Works

Most of his writings were assembled in four volumes published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, ranging from philosophical and educational themes to cultural and current issues of his time. His main books are:

- *Positivism: a critical reappraisal (Situação Valorativa do Positivismo)*, 1938.
- *On Philosophy (Da Filosofia)*, 1940.
- *Knowledge and Reality (Conhecimento e Realidade)*, 1940.
- *The Existential Foundations of Pedagogy (Fundamentação Existencial da Pedagogia)*, 1946.
- *History of Philosophy in Portugal (O Pensamento Filosófico em Portugal)*, 1946.

Aware of the cinema educational and formative potential, he wrote a number of movie reviews, namely on *The Prodigal Son* (Luis Trenker, Germany 1934), *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, USA 1949) and *Umberto D.* (Vittorio de Sica, Italy 1952).

Some of his texts are available online (in Port.):

- SANTOS, Delfim. *Letter to Hermann Hesse*, Lisbon: 1948 <sup>[4]</sup>
- SANTOS, Delfim. *On Ambiguity in Metaphysics*, Mendoza: 1949 <sup>[5]</sup>
- SANTOS, Delfim. *Pedagogy as Autonomous Science*, Mendoza: 1949 <sup>[5]</sup>
- SANTOS, Delfim. *Preface to Hermann Hesse's 'Klein und Wagner'*, Lisbon: 1952 <sup>[6]</sup>

## Main topics

Delfim's philosophical writings cover the study of modern and contemporary European thinkers, specially the contemporary German Phenomenologists, adopting the *aporetic*, anti-systematic approach to philosophical inquiry similar to onto-phenomenologist Nicolai Hartmann. Also from Hartmann's 'levels of reality' he adapted and further developed his own *pluriversal* or rather *pluriregional* views on 'reality', ascribing the scientific method of study exclusively to the material world and not to philosophical matters as the neopositivists propounded. He wrote comprehensively about the history of philosophical thinking in Portugal and Brazil, particularly on Silvestre Pinheiro Ferreira (1769–1846) arguably Brazil's first philosopher, and on Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), a Spanish scholar active at Coimbra University between 1597 and 1616.

In Education his work was instrumental to foster Portuguese pedagogical ideas, aiming at an existential synthesis between Philosophy and Pedagogy. Delfim made extensive public proposals towards a complete reform of the Portuguese educational system from kindergarten to university, showing a strong concern for professional instruction and apprenticeship; he recommended characterology as an auxiliary to vocational guidance, and published several essays on foreign pedagogues, namely on Pestalozzi and Maria Montessori, also making pioneering research on some of the most prominent Portuguese educationists, notably Almeida Garrett (1799–1854) and Adolfo Coelho (1847–1919).

In the literary and aesthetic field he was one of the directors of the Journal *A Águia* and one of the first ideologues of the *Presença* literary movement, (the so-called "Portuguese Second Modernism) which favored 'psychologism' by paying special attention to the protagonists' inner thoughts and conflicts of conscience in the line of Dostoevsky's novels, and articulated the Portuguese editions of German author Hermann Hesse, 1946 Literature Nobel laureate, whose work was deeply inspired by educational issues.

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- TEIXEIRA, António Braz. *O Essencial sobre a Filosofia Portuguesa (sécs. XIX e XX)*. Lisboa: INCM 2008.

Academic Genealogy	
Notable teachers	Notable students
Nicolai Hartmann Eduard Spranger Leonardo Coimbra	António Quadros Sebastião da Gama João Bénard da Costa Manuela de Sousa Marques Matilde Rosa Araújo

## External links

- DELFIM SANTOS Official Site <sup>[7]</sup>
- ASA, Figura de Pedagogo: Delfim Santos, *Correio da Educação*, Porto. <sup>[8]</sup>
- ESCOLA DELFIM SANTOS. *Biografia do Prof. Delfim Santos*. Lisboa. <sup>[9]</sup>
- GANHO, Maria de Lourdes Sirgado. *Da Filosofia de Delfim Santos*. Conferência proferida na Escola Delfim Santos. Lisboa: 26 de fev. de 1991. <sup>[10]</sup>
- GANHO, Maria de Lourdes Sirgado. *Delfim Pinto dos Santos*. Lisboa: IC, 1998. <sup>[11]</sup>

## See also

- Neopositivism
- Vienna Circle
- Existentialism
- Phenomenology
- Existential phenomenology
- Ontology
- Nicolai Hartmann
- Pedagogy
- Philosophy of education
- Characterology
- Hermann Hesse
- *Presença* (Portuguese literary movement)

## Notes

- [1] Papers of Charlie Dunbar Broad (1887-1971), philosopher (<http://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/db/node.xsp?id=EAD/GBR/0016/BROAD>)
- [2] Papers of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), philosopher (<http://rabbit.trin.cam.ac.uk/~jon/Witt/Wittgenstein.html>)
- [3] Primer Congreso Nacional de Filosofía, Mendoza, Argentina, 30 marzo / 9 abril 1949 (<http://www.filosofia.org/ave/001/a137.htm>)
- [4] [http://www.multiculturas.com/delfimsantos/manuela/carta\\_ds\\_hh.htm](http://www.multiculturas.com/delfimsantos/manuela/carta_ds_hh.htm)
- [5] <http://www.filosofia.org/aut/003/m49a0840.htm>
- [6] [http://www.multiculturas.com/delfimsantos/manuela/textos/DELFIM\\_SANTOS\\_pref\\_Ele\\_e\\_o\\_Outro\\_Hermann\\_Hesse\\_1952.pdf](http://www.multiculturas.com/delfimsantos/manuela/textos/DELFIM_SANTOS_pref_Ele_e_o_Outro_Hermann_Hesse_1952.pdf)
- [7] <http://www.delfimsantos.org>
- [8] [http://www.asa.pt/CE/PDF/334/CE\\_334\\_Figura.pdf](http://www.asa.pt/CE/PDF/334/CE_334_Figura.pdf)
- [9] [http://www.eb23-delfim-santos.rcts.pt/biografia\\_ds.htm](http://www.eb23-delfim-santos.rcts.pt/biografia_ds.htm)
- [10] [http://www.eb23-delfim-santos.rcts.pt/obra\\_ds.htm](http://www.eb23-delfim-santos.rcts.pt/obra_ds.htm)
- [11] <http://cvc.instituto-camoes.pt/filosofia/1910i.html>

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