Conferences

The crisis of modernity and curricular innovations: from discipline to control

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If this crisis of reason is essentially contemporary, it is because its origin lies in the implosion of the project grounded completely on Philosophy, in acknowledging that the "original" does not exist, and therefore, the "truth" necessarily multiplies. (...) Perhaps the "good Europeans" breathe a sigh of relief given this natural death of Platonism (Moura, 1996, p. 94).

Amongst all the changes that the curriculum has undergone since it was invented at the end of the 16th century, we are today witnessing one of the biggest and most radical changes in the four components that comprise this school artefact: the *planning* of the aims, the *selection of content*, putting this content into *action* in school and the *assessment*. These components, in recent decades, have been subject to a successive plethora of new analyses and new proposals. While some of them are of an extremely technical nature, others of a humanist character and others clearly of a political and critical perspective, the fact is an abundance of alternatives in the curriculum field have been put forward to educators, planners and managers of education policies. Whether saying how our curricular practices should be carried out, whether presented as panaceas to save education and society, whether denouncing the reproductivist role of the modern school curriculum, such analyses and correlative curricular proposals always search for innovation and seem to multiply infinitely.

Arguing that such transformations in school education — and especially those called curricular innovations — are "symptoms implicated" in the contemporary exacerbation of what is usually called the "crisis of modernity", I shall briefly discuss one of the curricular changes or transformations that is ongoing today. More specifically, I shall deal with the change of emphasis in the curricular logic: *from* the emphasis on discipline *to* the emphasis on control. This change is intimately linked to the

relations between the *liquidity* of the post-modern and the *flexibility* with which the curriculum is today dealt with and thought out. I therefore view the curricular transformations as manifestations — within the scope of school education — of the profound, fast and widespread changes that are occurring in passing from the modern to the post-modern — in terms of politics, culture, economics, thinking and society. As we know, this passage from the modern to the post-modern has been understood as a profound crisis of reason, also called by some a paradigm-breaking crisis.

This text[1] is both general and somewhat provocative; I shall not detail the processes mentioned above: I will only set down some of the discussions — now taken up again in the register of this (so-called) crisis of modernity — that myself and "my" research group[2] have been working on in recent years[3]. I hence intend to continue contributing to shaping the problem and a better understanding of some of the ongoing processes in contemporary school education, within the scope of *discipline*, *control*, *curricular architecture* and (the meaning and uses) of school *time* and *space*. I also intend to establish herein the initial discussions and theoretical bases for a differentiation that I believe will be very productive and which I am currently developing[4]. This is a differentiation between *leniency* and *flexibility*, such that one can say: while modern discipline functions to produce *docile bodies* (Foucault, 1989), post-modern control functions to produce *flexible bodies*. It is easy to understand how this is linked to the promotion of the new forms of asubjectivity and subjectivisation in today's world.

I shall begin with a prior note and clarification of two aspects. I shall then briefly discuss the concept of crisis and post-modern liquidity as the end manifestation of the crisis of modernity. Based on this, I shall deal with the current shift in the curricular field — from the emphasis on discipline to the emphasis on control — understood

as the mark of its connections with post-modern liquidity and the correlative curricular flexibility. Finally, I shall very briefly suggest that these shifts and transformations are in the production circuit of new subjectivities. Although this is an important and extremely interesting issue, I will not elaborate on it in this text.

A NOTE; TWO CLARIFICATIONS

We shall now move onto the prior note and two initial clarifications.

Prior note: when I refer in general to "school education in modernity", I am assuming neither that the school institution is unique nor that the practices and knowledge it puts into action are homogeneous, equal in all and any social, cultural and economic instance. But, despite the broad variety of school practices and knowledge, the different kinds of schools, the different profiles and aims depending on the social strata they are geared towards, it is easy to understand that they all share common presuppositions, targets and logic. Therefore, just as "The State is a practice" (Foucault, 2006, p. 324), so is the school. And as such both can acquire various forms and configurations, without modifying what they are. Even in the face of large polymorphisms, one knows when one is dealing with the State and state issues; likewise, one knows when one is looking into the school and school practices.

In analytical terms, one can say that all forms of school education maintain, within themselves, what Wittgenstein called "family similarities". There is an identity relation. But here identity should not be confused with likeness, as the linguistic definition of identity is, at the limit, recognition through similarity. As argued by Foucault (1987), identity does not imply permanence; and it can only be detected through non-identity[5].

First clarification: in referring to the transformations in the educational background, I take them only as changes and not as theoretical and practical moves forwards (or backwards). Hence, it is not a question of viewing them as desirable or undesirable, necessary or unnecessary, positive or negative, good or ruinous. It is clear that many of the new theories and proposals have resulted in progress being made in pedagogical knowledge, if we take progress to mean an increase in quality and in the detail of what is known and discussed. Many of the new theories and proposals have also led to improvements in the functioning of schools, more educational and even social equity and justice. But none of this serves as the starting point or the driving force behind the research. I adopt a descriptive and analytical perspective that does not allow me to ground the arguments and the problem on any prior judgement, or on any assumption outside the event itself. It is a way of looking at things — one can

say: a method (Veiga-Neto, 1996) — which assumes the existence of only one *a priori*; knowledge, the historical *a priori*.

Second clarification: in referring to the "symptoms implicated" I point out a situation that can be characterised as a logical implication between the related aspects. The relationships between, on the one hand, the transformations that are occurring in school educational practices and the respective theories, and on the other hand, the social and cultural transformations that seep from the school itself, are not mechanical, linear or cause-and-effect. As is very common in Social Sciences, we are faced with a situation that Deleuze called *immanent causality*[6]. As such, it is not a question of viewing the school only as something produced by the society it is immersed it, but also and at the same time, of viewing it as a producer of this society. Following Varela e Avarez-Uría (1991), we note how school has done (and to a large extent continues to do) much more than discipline the individuals that attend it and much more than teach certain areas of knowledge to these individuals. Throughout Modernity school has established itself as a piece of huge social and cultural machinery, i.e. a huge set of "machines" that, operating in articulation among one another, plays a crucial role in the political, cultural and economic formation of western society.

This machinery, as well as inventing specific *spaces* for the education of children and the young, has been decisive for the invention of *knowledge* and its respective *specialists*, charged with saying how to educate, teach, monitor and regulate these children and youths. And as they took increasing responsibility for these tasks, school institutionalised itself, in other words it was structured in terms of human and material resources and discourses, carving out an unparalleled place for itself in Modernity. And, as an institution, it is constituted as a condition for the possible invention of pedagogical knowledge and concepts of childhood and subject (Narodowski, 2001), for the stabilisation of the concepts of civility and civilisation (Varela & Avarez-Uría, 1991), for the establishment of liberal governmentality (Marshall, 1994; Veiga-Neto, 2000a) and even for the implantation of the modern national States as political models (Foucault, 1999, 2006).

CRISIS

Insofar as "modernity itself is defined as crisis" (Hardt & Negri, 2003, p. 93), there is nothing new in simply stating that today we are living a crisis of modernity[7]. This is the sense behind the words of Bauman (1998, p. 20): "modernity can be defined with the epoch, lifestyle, in which putting into order depends on dismantling the 'traditional' order, inherited and received; in which 'being' means a continuous new start." Therefore, it is this

constant starting and restarting that, in part, gives us this sensation of crisis.

What one has to do is examine the roots of inseparability between modernity and crisis, which may contribute to understanding how we are living not simply a crisis, but rather the (large and terminal) crisis of the modern world. It is with this goal that I now quickly and in an extremely simplified manner undertake a historical exercise.

Modernity began as the radical rejection, in cultural, political, economic and social terms, of the transcendent and sacred values of the medieval age. Hence, being modern implied, in the Renaissance, the destruction of the "relation with the past and [the declaration of] immanence of the new paradigm of the world and life" (Hardt & Negri, 2003, p. 92). It is this stress on immanence that allows the theorists of the *Empire* to talk about first modernity. But, against it, straight away powerful religious and political forces are organised, interested in recomposing the medieval transcendence — sacred, pastoral, authoritarian — that is lost through the action of secular thinking, of new life practices and renaissance aesthetics. This is how, in the fifteen hundreds, the second modernity arises and is established, as the first modern counter-revolution, in which order strives to beat the event, willpower strives to beat desire, administration strives to beat the unpredictable. This has to do with the secularisation and humanisation of time: losing sacredness, as it was experienced and understood throughout the Middle Ages, time is now left in the hands of man, master of his own destiny. And in being his own master, he is also responsible for himself.

It is easy to understand that all this is in the chain of conditions making it possible to instigate historical thinking and, correlatively, the (what we call) "sensation" of crisis. It is the very manifestation of the gap between attempts to predict and master the event and its precisely unpredictable nature. In other words: the crisis corresponds to the gap between what we think and plan will come to pass and what actually ends up happening. Our sensation of crisis is the magnitude of the difference between the expected, dreamed, desired and the obtained, updated, achieved.

But, despite the victory of transcendence, in spite of Descartes' efforts — the first major intellectual of the second modernity — immanence remained forever in the shadow of transcendence, as shown in philosophy such as Spinoza's, the political proposals of the anarchic movements, or thinking such as Nietzsche's. And because immanence is always in the shadow, it shades transcendence. Being modern, more than marking life in a given time, hitherto meant living in the shade of the conflict born out of forgetfulness; knowledge, the forgetting that a desacralized time, made human, has no place for transcendence. To sum up, the crisis has become pre-

cisely the manifestation "of the uninterrupted conflict between the immanent, constructive and creative forces and the transcendent power that aims to restore order. This conflict is the key to the concept of modernity, but has been effectively dominated and toned down" (Hardt & Negri, 2003, p. 94). Hence, in the terms of repositioning the platonic arc, "in the 17th century Europe became feudal again" (id.).

These questions lead us to ask: is the crisis the dark and negative side of modernity?

I suggest following the contributions of Hannah Arendt, when she shows us that it should not be viewed as something which is in itself negative (Arendt, 1997). If we examine the etymology of the word *crisis*, we see that in its Greek origins it does not have a negative connotation, but rather defines the taking of a position, a judgement or decision able to separate the true from the false. In Greek, *krisis, eōs* is both the ability to distinguish, separate, as well as to debate, dispute; the verb from which this word derives is *krínó* and means the very action of judging (to make a better decision). The Latin form *crisis,* changed its meaning to signify the moment of the decision whose objective is the undertaking of a sudden change in the course of an event, an action, an illness etc. The words derived from *crise-* such as *crítica, critério, endócrino* — do not have negative meanings; on the contrary they evoke even a degree of productivity. As Bornheim explains (1996, p. 49), "in all this there seems to be a trail of negativity — quite the opposite: there is the strength to choose, judge, discern, debate; these are words linked to the strength of thought and therefore to the creation of philosophy, science." Therefore, according to Arendt, crises are critical moments which provide us with the chance to reflect, in order to act to try and change the course of events; hence crisis has, in itself, a positivity that we should not waste.

This begs a question: where does the current idea that crisis is negative, something ruinous, a problem to be avoided come from?

In a very simplified way one can say that the negativity attached to crisis grew based on medical knowledge and practice. Initially linked to the moment the doctor should intervene (positively) against an ailment for the benefit of the patient, it seems there was immediately an inversion in the meaning of the word: in a short time crisis began to describe the undesirability of the processes of degeneration, decadence and death. It was thanks to the use of biological metaphors, so present and potent in the 19th century, that this negative meaning of crisis — as something undesirable — was transferred to the field of Social Sciences, especially Economics. In Marx, for example, crisis is the sudden breach of a contradiction. The crisis sets off a historical process that had remained blocked by a contradiction. As such, according to Marx, crisis gets history working. This means that "crises and

their violence are inserted at the core of a certain dialectic process. Hence, it is therein clarified what kind of negativity inhabits crisis, its intelligibility." (Bornheim, 1996, p. 50). But, even in this case, there is something positive in the Marxist crisis: despite dealing with a violent break away, it is on the road of dialectic resolution and, therefore, on the road to the confirmation of the solution to an impasse, on the road to unblocking a historical process.

But, while modernity is permanent crisis, this does not mean that there has been a constant intensity of this permanence. In contrast, given the combination between the *acceleration* of human time — in connection to advanced capitalism (Harvey, 1996; Virilio, 2000) — and the *rebelliousness* of the event — which insists in being "creative" and not obeying us — the (sensation of) crisis tends only to increase. As the world tries to be more administered and controllable — and as a consequence there is an intensification of the desire and attempt to predict and master the event — a bigger gap seems to grow between what one wants to happen and the stubborn and uncontainable event.

Hence, in recent decades, we have been experiencing the highest and most intense — and (for some) almost unsupportable — levels of this sensation. Following in the wake of the accumulation of so many crises, it seems that in recent decades the "delicate balance on which the modern world was always teetering" has been shattered (Veiga-Neto, 2006b, p.6). In the battle between the forces linked to transcendence — up until now more powerful — and the growing forces of immanence, now the balance seems to be leaning towards immanence. What is happening in society, in an increasingly intense manner, is the repositioning of immanence and a correlative de--transcendence. Now, quickly emerging from the shadows, immanence is starting to implode the "project of an absolute foundation of Philosophy" (Moura, 1966, p.94) and shows us that the big origin and the big single truth were platonic myths that adorned our understanding.

As we well know, Lyotard (1988, p. xv) proposes calling post-modern this new "state of culture after the transformations that affect the rules of the game of Science, Literature and the Arts, based on the end of the 19th century." We can call this new state post-modernity, contemporariness, late modernity, liquid modernity, hypermodernity, etc, it matters little. What is of most interest is that everything goes on (and goes by us) as if modernity — understood as *ethos*, as a way of being and thinking in the world — is left behind.

At several points I have made recourse to the metaphor coined by Bauman (2001), when he identifies, at the root of this major crisis, the accelerated liquefaction of the contemporary world. As the sociologist explains, fluids "do not fix space or freeze time," i.e. "they do not fix themselves very much to any form and are constantly ready (and able) to change" (Bauman, 2001, p. 8). While

our interaction with solids and the description of them are independent of time, with liquids exactly the opposite is the case, as they are always liable to change form. Therefore, while "solids suppress time, for liquids, on the other hand, it is time that is important" (id.).

It is this timelessness of solids that enables us to understand what some call "desire for solidity" or "search for solidity": it is solidity that stabilises us in time, thus making it easy for each person to find himself, inasmuch as, through the memory he retains of himself he sees himself as one and the same over time. The search for solidity is, therefore, in the circuit of the processes that invented the modern concept of subjectivity and the institution of the modern subject itself: an individual who is able to be a subject although, at the same time, he is asubjected to himself. Hence, that desire for solidity is at the basis of the modern myth of the single, fixed, undividable, original subject.

The combination between liquefaction and acceleration and beyond this the acceleration of liquefaction itself are implied in the major crisis of modernity. It is liquefaction that is at the root of the phenomenon that is typically post-modern called dissolution, blotting out or *deleting of borders*: liquids do not have borders or limits, but are moulded into the place or the conditions in which they are found.

Likewise, *flexibility* — a property today deemed important and desirable in itself — derives from the liquid nature of post-modernity. The same can be said of *volatility* and the correlative phenomenon of discarding, both crucial for the practice of hyper-consumption (consumerism). Words such as these — *liquefaction, acceleration, deleting of borders, flexibility*, *volatility* — so common in contemporary discourses, point towards the irreversible impermanence and instability of the post-modern world and towards the end of the myth of the modern subject as a stable and indivisible singularity. They are also words that serve to describe the new contemporary subjectivities in ethical, political, economic, cultural, social terms, their relationships with Nature and so forth.

CURRICULAR SHIFTS: FROM DISCIPLINE TO CONTROL

It is almost banal to state that school has been functioning, over the last four centuries, as the most important institution able to shape individuals in terms of discipline. The vast majority of us learn to be disciplinary (and, at the limit, disciplined), thanks to the actions of the machines — such as the *curriculum*, the *panoptic*, the *symbolic forms* etc. — which make up this huge school machinery. As shown in detail by Michel Foucault, school has constituted, at the end of the day, a crucial institution for the implantation of the disciplinary society that we

know today[8]. Although such statements seem obvious, they are necessary to denaturalise school education, the disciplinarian logic, control and even the modern subject. They are also important to better understand the shifts that are discussed herein.

At this point I believe it useful to comment on some issues regarding the curriculum, as a machine and school artefact invented at the end of the 16th century. Insofar as the curriculum was the artefact that in disciplinary terms articulated school practices and knowledge, one can say that, from its creation onwards it was closely linked to the production of the subject and Modernity itself. Without exaggeration, one can say that the curriculum has functioned as the main school artefact involved in the production of the modern subject. As an important part of the *episteme* of order and representation, the curriculum machine has been one of the conditions making it possible for this modern form of *being in the world* that was established based on renaissance Humanism.

As an organised set of items of school knowledge, the curriculum encompassed a disciplinary logic, undertaking a notable development, both in terms of the corporal axis — body-discipline — and in terms of the axis of knowledge — knowledge-discipline. In either case the disciplines are divisions and re-divisions — of knowledge and behaviours — that establish special, specific fields, of permissions and prohibitions, such that they delimit what can be said/thought and done ("against" what cannot be said/thought and done). The more this is naturalised, automatic and implicitly carried out, the more the disciplines "serve" the transcendence plan. To give an example: for structuralism, disciplinary order is understood as the very manifestation of transcendence of an underlying structure. An emphasis on the disciplinary aspect may mean an investment in transcendence...

As I explained elsewhere (Veiga-Neto, 1996, p. 246), the connection between the two disciplinary axes

> occurs precisely at the point in which the knowledge--discipline creates, we can say, mental conditions to enable the possibility whereby, thinking topologically, each person views as natural the walls that are imposed or which he/she is subject to. In naturalising these walls, the knowledge--disciplines "function as codes of permission and prohibition" (Elias, 1989, p. 529); it is in this sense that I say that they function as structures or a background framework.

On this point, to deal with disciplinarity it is worth making use of the Foucaultian concept of *device*, in order to be able to talk about the *device of disciplinarity*. Foucault used the word *device*, to mean a whole set of discursive and non-discursive practices whose elements are heterogeneous but which remain connected in a network of relations. Such elements are of different order and differing nature: discourses, institutions, theories, regulations and laws, scientific findings, social practices, philosophical proposals, architectures, etc. In other words, Foucault called *device* the network of relations that keep certain practices and correlative institutions articulated among one another and whose rationality plays strategic functions, i.e. functions whose main aim is to lever or maintain the power of some over others, the action of some over the actions of others.

To the extent that the curriculum was invented and perfected placing disciplinarity as the epistemological and practical cornerstone, it can be understood as an important part of the device of disciplinarity. As such, the curriculum embodies, either through its content or its form, an element that, in modern school, *is instituted with* and *institutes* disciplinary thinking. Therefore, the curriculum can be understood as the institutionalised and school branch of the procedures and mechanisms of objectivation and subjectivation (Popkewitz, 1994).

Viewed as part of the disciplinarity device, one understands how the curriculum manages to function, organising certain schemes of intelligibility. It is these schemes that "lead to automatic frameworks that dispense with the need for most explanations and justifications — which otherwise would be necessary — when we communicate in an increasingly complex world with ever broader and more varied fields of knowledge" (Veiga-Neto, 1996, p. 296). It is so because, as Lenoir explains (1993, p. 72), disciplines function "as institutionalised formations that organise schemes of perception, observation and action and which function as tools of knowledge and communication." Therefore, "as incorporated practical operators, they are political structures that mediate between the political economy and the production of knowledge" (id.). As Foucault explained (1992, p. 188), discipline makes the body the target of "a miniscule system of material coercions," not exactly to subjugate it, but to "simultaneously provide growth of the dominated forces and increase the force and effectiveness of those who dominate." It is here, according to philosophy, that there is the "invention of a new mechanic of power, with specific procedures, completely new tools and very different apparatus" (id.).

But if all this came to pass pretty effectively for a long time, it is clear we are now going through critical moments for the disciplinary devices; and consequently, also for the curriculum machine. In the general background of contemporary educational crises, the crisis of disciplinarity comes to the fore. From all quarters one hears: "Down with the disciplinary knowledge!" and "Pupils no longer know what discipline is!" It is therefore a crisis that is borne out in the axes both of knowledge--discipline and body-discipline. Hence, a crisis that shows itself precisely as a liquefaction and dissolution of borders signals a big blow for the disciplines, given that they necessarily "depend" on the existence of limits and

hierarchical divisions. The greater the solidity, the better for the disciplines — in both of its two axes.

Faced with such crises, several "solutions" are invented. In the former axis we have good examples with inter, contra, multi and trans-disciplinary pedagogies (Veiga-Neto, 1996) and the thematic transversality in the curriculum. In the latter, faced with reports and denouncements concerning the rise in school violence, techniques of control and disciplinary containment in school are refined — which often lead to the reappearance of old disciplinary practices, only accentuated and exacerbated.

It is exactly because it follows a disciplinary logic and because disciplinarity is in (profound) crisis that the curriculum is at the mercy of the widespread crisis of modernity. As a modern disciplinary machine — and therefore thought-out and organised as a hierarchical, solid, reliable, stable and lasting artefact — "dragged down" by the crisis of disciplinarity, it also falls into crisis. Discipline transports to the curriculum the crisis that it is itself suffering from.

As such, one can understand the majority of the new curricular proposals as attempts to de-disciplinarize the curricula, so as to immunise them from the crises that assail the disciplines. The reasoning is simple: if the curriculum, in being disciplinary, contributes to bringing the crisis inside the pedagogical practices, then with the elimination (or waning) of the disciplines, the curriculum is maintained but the crisis itself is kept at bay (or played down).

With regard to the curricular architecture, the thematic transversality serves as a good example of these attempts to de-disciplinarize. But even so, one has to recognise that it is still a palliative procedure, inasmuch as the transversal themes do not discard or get rid of, in themselves, the disciplines. In another aspect, the knowledge, from a more functional and not exactly architectural viewpoint of the curriculum, the emphasis is on the procedures of control. In this case it is not a question of intervening in the two first components that comprise the curriculum — as we saw earlier, the *planning* of the goals and the *selection of content* — but rather in the two other components — the ways through which the content is put into *action* and is *assessed*. It is precisely here that the control techniques in school are intensifying.

It is necessary to clarify the meaning attributed to the word *control* in this discussion. Originating in medieval Latin — *contra* (the opposite) + *rotŭlus* (roll of writings, list) — the French form *contrôle* — *contre* (the opposite) + *rôler* (roll of writings, list) — from which derives the Portuguese word, meant the registers that were stored in duplication, written on rolls of papyrus, parchment or paper. These rolls could be unrolled at any time, in order to check what was written against other registers. *To control* hence began to mean inspect, subject to examination, check, compare, exercise a restrictive or containment action.

Therefore, control does not imply, necessarily, a continuous action but rather and necessarily a continued, infinite action of registers and storage. As such, it is the opposite of vigilance, which is imposed in the most continuous, intensive, ostentatious and premature way possible, and ends up "incorporated" by those undertaking it; the result of this process is well known: in being objects under vigilance, each one ends up transformed into subjects that watch over themselves — and for exactly this reason they are able to exercise self-government over themselves. Control, even if it is a "threat" to us, is sporadic and discontinuous as regards the collection, processing and storage of information.

Vigilance, disciplining and subjectivisation go in one direction; control, information and (also) subjectivisation go in another... If panopticism — to the extent that the panoptic is able to carry out hierarchical, individualised, microphysical and continuous vigilance[9] — has become the great architectural machine of disciplining, in modernity we can symmetrically think of the data bank as the great architectural machine of control, in the post-modern.

Having discussed the differences between, on the one hand, vigilance and disciplining, and on the other hand, control and information, what movements are taking place within (and in the scope of) each one?

As suggested by Michel Foucault and developed by Deleuze (1992, p. 220), "control societies are replacing disciplinary societies." This does not mean to say that the disciplines will disappear or that control is something new. What is happening is a shift in emphasis, in which the disciplinary logic is overridden by control techniques, all in order to keep social risks at minimally safe levels. Of course we continue to be monitored; panopticism itself, even when taking on new forms, is still everywhere[10]. What is quickly changing are the goals of this new vigilance: they are no longer disciplinary, apart from to contain and register information about our actions; certainly not on rolls of parchment, but on magnetic rolls, optical disks and databases so that one can, at any time in the future, check, inspect and examine.

Various interconnectable systems of control proliferate in these new societies which manifest themselves materially, for us, in the infiniteness and redundancy of reports, forms, files, hierarchical passwords, cards, registers, portfolios, records (in databases) and an endless number of other documents. They are all widespread and easily affordable thanks to telematic resources, and rain down on us, steal our time and keep us captive, scrutinised and accessible at any instant. Towards them we can adopt a *docile* and resigned attitude, supplying all that is asked of us in a disciplined manner; but we can be *flexible* and strategically enter the game. In this case we shall react with new tactics for each incursion of the mechanisms of control, constantly assessing the balance

between what is lost and what is won in which we acquiesce (or not) to each new demand. The extent to which each person is either more docile, disciplined, solid or more flexible, (un)controllable and liquid will depend on the relations between his own subjectivity and the demands of the system.

I hope it has become clear just how deep the implications of this are for the curriculum. In the same way, as I have already mentioned, that the focus on transcendence resulted in the emphasis on disciplinarity, now the focus on immanence is resulting in the emphasis on control. This functions as a condition enabling the weakening of — or the reduced importance attached to — *planning* of the aims and *selection of content* — and the correlative strengthening of the ways in which the content is put into *action* and is *assessed*. As such, more and more discourses on self-learning are multiplying, teaching methodologies are being invented, the focus is shifting to what could be the most important thing in school education, assessment processes are multiplying, institutions and people are being classified and ranked. Such proliferations and inventions, in turn, feed from the interconnectable control systems that I listed above. A coherent structure in constant movement is hence formed; a structure in a network, which, forcibly trapped in it, nobody can escape from — pupils, teachers, managers.

On this point I again bring into play the confrontation between immanence and transcendence. As I have already related elsewhere (Veiga-Neto, 2006b, p. 18), we can find in the very definition of civil society — increasingly impotent to "account for the mediation between the 'many' immanents (capital) and the 'single' transcendence (State)" — the roots of passing from a society with the emphasis on discipline to a society with the emphasis on control. "In a society that is increasingly (immanentized), there is a growing importance of all the social bodies that continually and intimately operate in the production of subjectivities" (id.). Hence, while the school was for a long time the main institution systematically involved in education and the production of subjectivities, it is now losing ground to other bodies in society. This is so expressive that it even opens up interesting avenues of studies for the new field of pedagogical knowledge called Cultural Pedagogies.

A final comment: while disciplining leads to states of lasting docility, control seems to stimulate flexibility, as it provokes those subject to it to come up with tricks and plans of escape, avoidance and (at the limit) refusal. Therefore, a docile subject is an easy subject to handle/ guide because he has learned, interiorised and "automated" certain mental-corporal behaviours that are to a greater or lesser extent permanent. The docile subjects, having been objects of disciplinary strategies, make them part of their soul, so as to submit to them themselves; they can be self-governed. A flexible subject is different:

he is permanently tactical. Therefore, in searching for greater efficacy to achieve his aims, the flexible subject presents adaptable behaviours and is always prepared to change direction, in order to better prepare for the changes. Docility, in being stable and enduring, is the order of modern solidity; flexibility, in being adaptable, stealthy, is the order of post-modern liquidity.

The question which arises from here onwards is to examine, in detail, how the school machinery is instituting new processes of subjectivation and producing new subjects. As such, researching the details of the transformations that are occurring in the machines, artefacts and devices which, at the same time are transforming themselves, also transform (directly) the subjects that they take for themselves and (indirectly) society.

Endnotes

1. This text was written to be presented at Symposium no. 43 – *Curricular innovations: epistemological and cultural breaches* – during the *14th National Meeting of Education Didactics and Practice* (XIV ENDIPE), held in April 2008, in the city of Porto Alegre, RS.

2. Comprising a *Group of Studies and Research into the Curriculum and Post-Modernity*, in which colleagues linked to the *Universidade Luterana do Brasil* and the *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* have taken part. For further details on the group's production, see: Acorsi (2007), Coutinho (2002, 2003a, 2003b), Klaus (2004), Noguera (2007a, 2007b), Noguera & Marin (2007), Oliveira (2007), Saraiva (2007, 2006a, 2006b), Moraes (2007).

3. See, mainly, Veiga-Neto (1996, 1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2005, 2006a).

4. Here one must mention the discussions I have held with Antônio Luiz de Moraes, my supervisor in the Post-Graduation in Education (Master's) Programme of the *Universidade Luterana do Brasil*. I would like to express my gratitude especially to him for the richness of his input.

5. For greater clarification, I transcribe an extract in which Foucault (1987, p. 37) deals with this issue: "Paradoxically, defining a set of announcements in which the individual is present would consist of describing the dispersion of these objects, grasping all the nuances that separate them, measuring the distances between them – in other words, formulating their law of division."

6. As I have mentioned several times, I am using this expression in the sense that Deleuze (1991, p. 46) gave to immanent causality: the cause "that is updated in its effect. In other words, the immanent cause is one whose effect updates, integrates and differentiates", whereby there is a "correlation, reciprocal presupposition between cause and effect, between the abstract machine and the specific agencies."

7. I draw attention to the tautology. Perhaps more than not constituting any innovation, through the redundancy of the announcement it does not even make much sense that we are *now* in times of crisis...

8. For those less versed in the matter, it is worth pointing out the following: saying that modern society is *disciplinary* does not imply saying that it is *disciplined*.

9. As Foucault showed (1989), in panopticism it is of little importance whether the vigilance takes place continually or intermittently. What is important is that it exists and shows itself as a continuous promise (or threat…).

10. The descriptions and analyses of the new configurations that panopticism has taken on today are extremely interesting. One talks about *post-panopticism*, *hyperpanopticism*, *synopticism* etc. These concepts have huge educational implications. An initial discussion can be found in Bauman (2001).

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