

Democratic limits of a common-to-all training project

Limites democráticos de um projeto de formação comum a todos

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ABSTRACT¹

The writing of this text is mobilized by the discomfort caused by what is argued to be the “naturalization” of the idea of commonality present in curricular theories and policies. It is from this discomfort that it is proposed to reflect about the meanings of subject and, consequently, definitions of knowledge have been mobilized in curricular theories and policies? Assuming a deconstructive Derridean position, the democratic pretensions of discourses that project the formation of common identities filled by knowledge meant as universal is problematized. Arguments based on the contributions of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory are developed, in dialogue with the reflections produced by Jacques Derrida related to the philosopher’s critique of logocentrism. Without attempting to offer definitive truths, this text is an invitation to reflect on the need to destabilize norms and expose their limits, deconstructing the fragile pillars of structures that support the democratic pretensions of common formation projects. The bet is on the potential hyperpoliticization of the social struggle that opens with the appropriation of theoretical contributions presented in this text.

Keywords: Post-foundationalism; Common; Subject; Knowledge; Democracy.

RESUMO

A escrita deste texto é mobilizada pelo incômodo causado por aquilo que se argumenta ser a “naturalização” da ideia de comum, presente nas teorias e nas políticas curriculares. É a partir desse incômodo que se propõe refletir sobre as significações de sujeito e, consequentemente,

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¹ Research Support Foundation of Rio de Janeiro State (Faperj) & CNPq.

definições de conhecimento que têm sido mobilizadas nas teorias e nas políticas curriculares. Assumindo uma postura desconstrutiva derridiana, problematiza-se as pretensões democráticas de discursos que projetam a formação de identidades comuns preenchidas por conhecimentos significados como universais. Desenvolve-se argumentos sustentados nas contribuições da teoria do discurso de Ernesto Laclau e Chantal Mouffe, em interlocução com reflexões produzidas por Jacques Derrida na crítica que o filósofo faz ao logocentrismo. Sem a pretensão de oferecer verdades definitivas, este texto configura-se como um convite para que se possa refletir sobre a necessidade de desestabilizar as normas e expor seus limites, desconstruindo os frágeis pilares de estruturas que sustentam as pretensões democráticas de projetos de formação comum. Aposta-se na potencial hiperpolitização da luta social, que se abre com a apropriação das contribuições teóricas apresentadas neste texto.

Palavras-chave: Pós-fundacionalismo; Comum; Sujeito; Conhecimento; Democracia.

Starting the conversation

The current study was encouraged by the discomfort caused by the so-called “naturalization” of the sense of “common” observed in different discipline matrix theories and policies. Is it based on this annoyance that we reason about what meanings of subject and, consequently, what definitions of knowledge have been mobilized in curriculum theories and policies. We herein advocate for the urgency of reasoning about problematizing different meanings given to the concepts of subject and knowledge in projects that claim for and are committed to democratic training processes. Therefore, we herein ask: how can a common-to-all training be democratic?

This theoretical provocation is based on our appropriation of post-foundationalist principles, with emphasis on the discourse theory by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2010), in association with Derridean theoretical operators (DERRIDA, 1973, 1991, 2005, 2006). Our theoretical approach takes the discursive perspective focused on addressing social phenomena to investigate foundations capable of justifying and legitimizing discourses that project a common and better future for all. In order to do so, and based on Macedo (2017), we advocate that this common future is designed from, and for, a generic “all”. This salvationist perspective of education favors the erasure of lives, cultures and of other ways of living in, and relating to, the world. Moreover, it enables cultural acknowledgement projects that emphasize worrisome ethical-political violence types that have negative effects on differences.

The first part of the current manuscript presents theoretical contributions, whose appropriation enabled reasoning about how the salvationist perspectives of education claim for universalizing projects that end up favoring the attempts to control and standardize the educational process. On behalf of the idea of commonality, they operate based on logic, according to which, it is possible controlling subjects’ training process – which must be oriented towards a predetermined direction. We advocate that training

processes are subjective and unpredictable; therefore, attempts to control them end up creating constraints that make individuals perceive themselves as a singular presence in a world inhabited by differences (BIESTA, 2013). The second part of the current manuscript argues that meanings attributed to subject and knowledge, in association with the sense of “common” have limitations capable of preventing the implementation of a radical democratic training.

Deconstructive reading to help better understanding the problem

Before we start, it is necessary pointing out that the herein presented reflections result from Derrida’s deconstruction movement (DERRIDA, 2005), which we have sought to apply in our studies – this movement enabled broadening world-reading perspectives. We herein understand deconstruction as intense and endless transcendental questions that take “[...] into account the possibility of fiction, of the accidental and of contingency” (DERRIDA, 2005, p. 159, our translation).

We have been reflecting about totalizing projects and assumingly universal worldviews from this very “place”, since they presuppose the existence of something common to all, such as the educational projects of modern times. Thus, they are discourses operating with concepts of subject that authorize ready and unique (common) identity projects, that, in their turn, legitimize the privilege granted to certain knowledge, which is selected to fill the common identity projected as the most appropriate one.

Contributions from Laclau and Mouffe’s theory of discourse (2010), in association with Derrida’s operators, were the theoretical construct substantiating our endeavor, which sought to question the sense of common as the understanding that every common training project is based on the assumption of ‘something universal’ that must be common to all. This idea is often accepted in the education (universal) and discipline matrix (particular) fields.

However, based on Laclau’s (2011) contributions, we consider this idea problematic, since the aforementioned author stresses the particular-universal dichotomy that operates based on understanding discourse as practice of meaning, as well as advocates, together with Mouffe, “[...] that every social configuration is significant” (LACLAU; MOUFFE, 2015, p. 39). Based on this understanding about discourse, the aforementioned authors operate based on understanding hegemony as articulatory practice, as discursive operation aimed at universalizing a given discourse to give meanings as attempt to reach the fullness that is missing in the social aspect.

According to Laclau (2011), hegemony formation is the process through which a particular discourse starts representing something greater than the process itself. This understanding breaks with the particular-universal dichotomy and turns it into a mutually referenced element, since, in order for the discourse articulating the “we” to present

itself as universal, it must incorporate differentiated meanings that allow particularities, which are different from “we”, to feel represented by something they are not.

According to Laclau and Mouffe (2010), the process to articulate particular differences is essential for hegemony formation. In addition, the aforementioned authors emphasize that the hegemonic discourse, which is understood as universal, is loaded with particular meanings that are permanently in dispute, since, although particularities are discursively articulated in a chain of equivalences, they keep differential relationships between them. Moreover, hegemony formation is an endless meaning production and articulation process that prevents the full fixation of meanings. It is so, because the greater the proliferation of meanings, the greater the articulation and the intensity of disputes over meaning, a fact that makes the hegemonic articulation precarious, despite its apparent stability.

The theory of discourse developed by Laclau and Mouffe (2010) can be understood as a hegemony theory, based on which, the aforementioned authors explain the functioning of “social” as endless discursive construction process. They appropriate contributions from Derrida’s theoretical operators to understand the functioning of “social” as textuality.

Jacques Derrida has dedicated his work to the critique of logocentrism, which he defined as “[...] metaphysics of phonetic writing, which, in essence, was nothing more than the most original and powerful ethnocentrism” (DERRIDA, 1973, p. 3) that imposes and regulates the very concept of writing, as well as of the history of metaphysics. The Algerian-born French philosopher mainly criticized logocentrism, given its attempt to fix forms and meanings, words and ideas. He opposed to the understanding of language as full and transparent representation of both social phenomena and material world. According to Derrida (1973), any relationship between language and objects (named by us) can only become intelligible through translation processes.

Far from giving in to the centrality and to the permanent and untouchable rules of logocentrism in contemporary Western tradition, Derrida (1991, p. 35) has used the idea of *différance* “[...] to cross the order of understanding” by going beyond the limits of closed systems, by approaching difference as something ontological and, consequently, by creating a heterogeneous and infinite space to think about philosophy and life. The aforementioned author defends, and operates with, the idea of writing, based on the understanding that nothing is under the authority of the one who writes; thus, he values inevitable processes, such as negotiation, translation and deferral.

We have appropriated Derrida’s idea of translation to address the impossibility of an order, of an outcome. Translation, itself, is presented by Derrida (2006) as an impossible task - i.e., translating the untranslatable -, since “[...] the irreducible multiplicity of languages shows a “non-end”, the impossibility of completing, totaling, saturating and putting an end to anything belonging to the order of edification”, as highlighted by Cunha and Costa (2015, p. 5). According to Derrida (2006), translation can be

understood as one of the “symptoms” of the order of *différance* in its lack of centrality and origin. Translation focuses on infinite substitution; it is how it escapes the attempt to fix meanings in closed structures of meaning.

Derrida (2006) describes translation as permanent betrayal of the possibility to recover original meanings. Mouffe (2003), dialogues with the aforementioned philosopher and advocates that the impossibility of fully fixing meanings enables manifesting conflicts in favor of a radical democracy. This idea of democracy includes the difference and the unpredictable, as well as the imponderable, as sliding factor towards the comfortable duality between concepts, such as equality and freedom, which are structural democratic pillars. Differences imposed in political games destabilize discourses that are articulated based on unstable and provisional consensus, such as training projects intended to be common to all.

Derrida’s contributions (1973, 1991, 2005, 2006) are relevant to our inquiries about discourses featured by traces of universal essentialism that support training projects aimed at reaching everyone, and it favors the sense of common. We advocate that the formulation of these projects is based on acknowledging fixed foundations capable of legitimizing them – i.e., foundations capable of guaranteeing the universality dimension attributed to them. However, based on the assumed theoretical contributions, this legitimacy is established in a language game of its own (LYOTARD, 1986), according to which, foundation embodied as premise also results from a discursive construction that justifies and legitimizes the project designed as universal.

We resort to post-foundationalist principles to question the existence of any single, fixed and pre-defined foundation capable of permanently explaining the functioning of “social”, in order to support this argument (AUTOR 1, 2017). We question the idea of a foundation used *a priori* to organize structures that are also thought *a priori*. According to Lopes (2013, p. 13), every structure “[...] rests on a founding core that guarantees its structurality, guides its structure, but that always refers to a given presence, to a foundation that cannot be explained within the structure itself. The structure requires a relationship with an exterior aspect that constitutes it”.

Therefore, it is about seeing the structure as discursive, relational and open construction, without implying an anti-foundational stance, but rather understanding and operating with the idea that every foundation in the political game is a necessary and contingent discursive construction, as well as a provisional fixation that does not hold any legitimacy.

We advocate, along with Laclau and Mouffe (2010, 2015), that there is no single, fixed and pre-defined foundation capable of permanently explaining the functioning of “social”. The aforementioned authors made this statement inspired by Jacques Derrida’s contributions about the impossibility of stopping the meaning attribution process, as well as of producing meanings about social phenomena. However, it is not

a matter of denying the existence of foundations, but of declaring their precariousness and contingency, of assuming them as discursive constructions.

We address foundations based on the idea of contingency, by assuming that anything can happen and that, consequently, it is not possible peremptorily stating whether it will, or will not, happen, that everything is unpredictable and lacks fixed foundations to attest whether something will, or will not, happen as expected. Laclau and Mouffe (2010, 2015) explain this precariousness and contingency by breaking with the sense of social as closed and totalizing structure in order to think of it as textuality, according to which, politics emerges as ontological dimension of “social”; therefore, the discourse category plays key role in it.

These reflections support our understanding that there is no political discourse or world project enunciated through an educational political project capable of permanently playing the role of a permanent order, which, in its turn, is capable of ultimately ceasing signification, negotiation and translation processes, and of saturating the “social”. We go further and defend, together with Mouffe (2003), the (un)desirability of this project due to its anti-democratic nature, since there is nothing outside the discourse that can fully attest to the greater legitimacy of a given project and/or of a given meaning over many other possibilities of meaning. This understanding of the functioning of “social” favors its hyper-politicization (MOUFFE, 2003), since legitimacy can only be ensured in contextual political struggles, although always in a precarious and provisional way.

Totaling and universal training projects can only be substantiated by a generic “common” and “all” – subjects thought *a priori*, whose training embodies certain contents that are also selected *a priori*. We advocate that attempts to control the imponderable turn us into “[...] divided and precarious discursive beings” (LOPES, 2013, p. 8); thus, attempts to control what we are, actually, enable erasing differences. This is the reason why we question the democratic nature of these projects.

Common to all, but what/who fits “all”?

After having explained the theoretical contributions supporting our reflections, we address the issues motivating this article, namely: attempts to impose the “common” in *spaces-times* of difference, and how these attempts articulate different meanings of subject and, consequently, of the knowledge that has been mobilized in discipline matrix theories and policies. We argue that the sense of “common” is part of a supposedly democratic educational tradition that should be questioned. Thus, the previously presented theoretical contributions help us move towards the deconstruction of rooted meanings.

Having said that, we move forward in the development of this article by taking Price’s (2014) questions as reference: after all, who is this “common” intended to? What are the discipline matrix theories and policies that promise to teach the same thing to

everyone, based on the questionable (very little) democratic premise of certainty about who subjects are, what they are, and how could they turn themselves into something else, on behalf of the common world project intended to?

We understand these discourses as promises substantiated by the expectation that it is possible forming abstract universal subjects. Identities projected *a priori*, whose formation presupposes the appropriation of knowledge, skills and competences that are selected to be taught to all, as condition to build a full and democratic world - educational projects wherein democracy is defined as *future*. It is worth emphasizing that these projects are tuned to the wishes of a discipline matrix tradition that operates based on the assumption that it is likely forming identities based on a given project of society (CUNHA, 2019).

Thus, our criticism is not limited to official discipline matrix policies, such as the National Common Curricular Basis (BNCC - Base Nacional Comum Curricular), for example. On the contrary, our perspective is that BNCC's commonality dialogues with a tradition that appears problematic to us, since we focus on the idea of universal knowledge, which must be common to all, rather than on contents defined by the Basis as common. We understand that the sense of 'common' articulates meanings around the fantasy/desire to organize a common world (ARENDR, 1961), a virtualized world free of conflicts and disputes that, consequently, gives a civilizing nature to a society that would wait for us in a utopian future. Given its civilizing nature, this discourse becomes hegemonic and starts to produce meanings capable of renewing a given tradition by blocking other possible meanings. However, the theoretical contributions guiding our reflections allow us to question this assumption.

We understand that subjects in these projects are meanings *a priori*, identities thought of as positivity. From this perspective, we head towards Laclau (2000), who rejects the idea of a single foundation capable of fully defining the structurality of a given political identity. According to the aforementioned author, identities are discursively built from acts of identification that are always relational. Thus, Laclau (2000) states that the internal positivity of a given discourse is only possible in the antagonistic relationship established by a constitutive exterior, by a difference expelled from the articulation that becomes a condition for any political identification. In other words, the likelihood of the internal articulation of a given discourse, as well as the positivity of a given identity, depends on a "negative", on what identity is not, since "[...] antagonism and exclusion are constitutive of every identity" (LACLAU, 2011, p. 88).

Based on thinking about the constitution of subjects as acts of identification that are always provisional and contextual, Lopes (2013) claims that it is not possible to fully control the meanings of what we are, of what we think we are, and of what we say. "The subject - understood as subjectivation - is an unfinished project, a signifier that circulates depending on an always-postponed meaning" (LOPES, 2013, p. 8), without

a “[...] safe harbor to build us as subjects, to guide our projects and to solve conflicts around different world-reading options” (LOPES, 2013, p. 8).

We agree with the aforementioned author; and we conclude that projects focused on forming subjects *a priori* are attempts to block identification possibilities. These projects are based on the idea that it is likely knowing who and what the subject is, or will be; from this perspective, all one has to do is to apply standards and rules as attempt to enable what we say the subject should become. These standards and rules enable the formation of an invented subject (DERRIDA, 2005), a project that matches subjectivities to the logic of recognition, based on rigid normative frameworks (BUTLER, 2015) that are necessary to contain disputes over meanings and to forge the construction of a common and recognizable subject. They are attempts to erase differences that get more intense due to the outspread of the sense of commonality, which points out the existence of an ultimate path to guide societies and subjects towards a better and more democratic future. It does so by abusing meanings of democracy, which try to stabilize disputes and to select differences that can be positively validated and recognized in a virtualized new ideal and common world. It is a normative project focused on ordering and regulating subjects based on pre-established standards (MACEDO, 2017).

These projects do not provide space for the “unexpected” to emerge. They are projects “[...] of recognition, wherein there is no room for the imponderable” (MACEDO, 2017, p. 543). On behalf of what is common to all, they deny the place of otherness to the “other” by limiting the alternatives, so that differences can become an entity in a “[...] world populated by others who are not like us” (BIESTA, 2013, p. 26). These projects present themselves as democratic, but they impose on the “other” the idea of a generic “all” and “common”, on behalf of a utopian future classified as better, more adequate and universal. Through this imposition, they can become intolerable towards those who do not adjust to it and, because they do not do so, they need to be controlled, watched, and it ends up favoring and justifying a school culture based on “[...] rigorous inspection and control systems and on increasingly prescriptive educational protocols” (BIESTA, 2013, p. 36). Thus, those who do not submit to what is established tend to be seen as expendable, and it leads to, and intensifies, the precariousness of life (BUTLER, 2018).

These are attempts to control chaos; however, according to Derrida (2005), it is precisely because all we have is chaos that we feed expectations to control it, in order to fulfill the desire/fantasy of an organized, better and more efficient society. Nevertheless, theoretical contributions enable stating that what we call “reality” actually concern conflicting and chaotic constructions: “Communities lacking consensus, which are collaborative but yet incredibly complex, changing and sometimes conflicting” (MILLER, 2014, p. 2058). Thus, any project aimed at finding consensus and harmony will always carry anti-democratic marks, since, according to Derrida (1973, 2006), ultimate consensus and harmony presuppose an impossible agreement between conflicting and complex meanings. There is no way to stop politicization; there is no

way to systematize and limit meaning-attribution processes and disputes arising from them. We understand these attempts as ways to control chaos, to overcome “crises” seen as barrier for the “social” to be fully built.

Based on Derrida (1991), we understand that *différance* reinforces the impossibility of granting the continuity of mechanisms capable of making the “commons” viable and of offering us support to question the classic rhetoric of standardization and control, since

[...] In the delineation of *différance* everything is strategic and adventurous. Strategic because no transcendent truth present outside the field of writing can govern theologically the totality of the field. Adventurous because this strategy is a not simple strategy in the sense that strategy orients tactics according to a final goal, a *telos* or theme of domination, a mastery and ultimate reappropriation of the development of the field. [...] If there is a certain wandering in the tracing of *différance*, it no more follows the line of philosophical-logical discourse [...] (DERRIDA, 1991, p. 38).

At this point, we address the ideas of knowledge articulated in projects focused on forming invented subjects, whose identity needs to be filled with knowledge endowed with “powers” that are also invented. They are educational training projects based on the idea of contents *a priori* that must be acknowledged in advance (MACEDO, 2017).

Investments in the incorporation of post-foundationalist approaches have enabled movements to destabilize meanings that seem to be rooted, such as democracy, subject, quality and knowledge, among others. These meanings support training projects based on an ideal of rationality, according to which, the appropriation of a given knowledge type is stated as condition, both for the emancipation of subjects who will build and inhabit a better world, and for the training of subjects able to take jobs in a globalized and technological world. From both perspectives, what the subject is expected to become is signified in a different way, but these two perspectives assume the possibility of controlling what the subject is and will be, as well as the meaning of knowledge as something to be appropriated as condition for this identity to exist (AUTHOR 1, 2017).

As described by Young (2014), this knowledge type is meant as epistemologically superior and powerful, because it is endowed with a rationality that would enable subjects to understand the way the world functions and intervene in it, by operating “[...] necessary transformations to reorient the functioning of the world towards a new previously established direction” (AUTHOR 1, 2017, p. 601). It concerns a knowledge type meant as universal, whose appropriation must be common to all.

At this point, we can also identify disputes for meanings given to the knowledge type to be appropriated by all, which must be common to all, as well as for who is eligible to be granted with certain meanings of “all”. It is worth emphasizing that our interpretations do not imply neutrality in the political struggle for meaning. They do not imply giving up designing and fighting for a better world, or describing certain

knowledge types as more or lesser adequate. We do not place ourselves out of the political game. However, we advocate that it is necessary exercising radical surveillance, so as not to lose sight of the fact that all possible meanings are, and will always be, contextual. Thus, we assume, as suggested by Derrida (2005), that our desires and our meanings are messianic promises; they are necessary promises even if they are not fulfilled, even if we know that they cannot be fulfilled. These promises are necessary in contextual situations wherein we make commitments and take ethical responsibility towards the “other”, although without ceasing to see this “other” as alterity.

It is from this perspective that we also consider the meanings of knowledge that authorize and justify decisions made on behalf a subject’s project problematic. We state that attempts to signify a given knowledge type as more or lesser adequate to subjects’ formation express tensions and disputes among different cultural-based world projects that appear to be enough to question the claim of universality of any knowledge type. According to Author 1 (2017, p. 601), “[...] they are disputes over power to give meaning to both the world and the knowledge produced based on it and, consequently, to define the place of this knowledge in the discipline matrix”.

These disputes articulate the meaning of an epistemologically superior knowledge type within a specific pragmatics and language game (LYOTARD, 1986) that attribute a superior rationality, to this knowledge, which justifies and authorizes its appropriation by subjects as condition for them to engage in the emancipatory task of transforming the world, in order to guarantee “[...] improvements on man’s moral or spiritual condition” (SACRISTÁN, 1999, p. 150). It is a fixed and pre-defined identity that carries along a universality dimension that, as previously addressed, we assume impossible.

We focus on understanding knowledge as “continuous act of translation” (BHABHA, 2013 *apud* MACEDO, 2017, p. 550) that helps us thinking about the imposition of the idea of universal knowledge as attempt to imprison subjects in simulacra, in bodies and in stories that are not truly theirs, on behalf of a project of society that presupposes the erasure of differences, although not all of them, by calculating differences that should exist to help keeping a certain order. It is the formation of an invented subject.

An identity endowed with a rationality that would enable “seeing” beyond appearances. And, by being able to “see beyond”, it would be able to operate the necessary transformations to reorient the functioning of the world in a pre-established new direction. An identity for whom the world becomes fully intelligible because it is endowed with the necessary knowledge to ensure it to happen. (AUTOR 1, 2017, p. 601).

However, there is another dimension to this problem. Overall, the relationship between knowledge and subject established in training projects operates based on the logic that the subject appropriates the knowledge transmitted to it. At this point, we go back to Derrida (2006) to problematize the idea of transmission. We advocate

that it assumes a representational model of language as if it expressed things exactly as they are, as if processes focused on naming things were not attempts of translation that always escape, that do not allow themselves to be imprisoned. Therefore, all we have, including the teaching and learning processes, are endless meaning-attribution processes; thus, the idea of transmission cannot be supported. All communication is precarious, and it does not mean that we should, or that we can, abdicate it as political possibility (LOPES, 2017), without giving up otherness as constituent dimension of social relationships.

We agree with Pinar (2008), who stated that training projects that determine the liberation/emancipation/appropriation of a specific knowledge type keep the same essentialist logics that articulate market projects by operating through binary oppositions in their analyses and political outcomes.

We advocate that lack of radical questions about the implications of these essentialist logics - that substantiate universal concepts of knowledge - ends up favoring proposals, such as that by BNCC, since they “talk” to the demands of school colonization by science (MACEDO, 2006). Thus, they objectify knowledge and, consequently, the discipline matrix; they also disregard disputes over meaning as attempt to prescribe certain knowledge seen as necessary and superior for the formation of a given society, wherein everyone supposedly can be at the same learning level. This process nourishes a complicated fantasy that - in an ideal society that is fully aligned with the terms of democracy - everyone must be equal, as well as know and learn the same things (PRICE, 2014), in a certain, and imprisoned, period-of-time.

However, despite the attempt to impose a certain meaning of knowledge and discipline matrix, this prescription creates obstacles, but it is not capable of fully stopping the meaning-attribution process. What and how to teach and learn remain translated without the possibility of ultimately controlling these processes, despite the standards and rules formulated for this purpose. Attempts to expel unpredictability from curriculum theories and policies express yearnings for an even and homogeneous world / identities.

Therefore, based on the argument that there is no indispensable universal knowledge for a supposed – and utopian – emancipation, we aim to take, in our reflections, the task of constantly complicating the current hegemonies (MACEDO, 2019), by reaffirming that the apparent fixation of meanings attributed to them results from discursive disputes that take place in asymmetrical, although not immutable, power relations that remain precarious and contingent. Thus, a room is opened for democracy as *future*, as permanent construction here and now, without permanent certainties about the future.

Without the pretense to conclude...

We herein criticize meaning-attribution processes supporting the meanings given to

a rational discipline matrix. These meanings are part of a modern hegemonic tradition applied to build an evolved and effective contemporary society through school, since we understand that these movements, which are supported by scientific rigor and authority, end up building a permanent concept of knowledge that authorizes the idea of commonality to be defended in Western educational policies and in discourses of present times.

It is precisely because of the ontological impossibility of establishing meanings in human relations in the political, economic and social spheres that the sense of common emerges, and is established, as democratic. However, “common” is also an impossibility that, once taken to its ultimate consequences, can compromise democracy by authorizing and legitimizing violence, as well as the exclusion of particularities that do not recognize each other, and that are not recognized, in common projects. Defining common identities and selecting different knowledge types as the most adequate to fulfill these identities can favor the erasure of memories, ways of life and differences, which are overall seen as threats to the functioning of a virtual and fragile order craved as ideal. Certainly, the “common” attacks all relationships constituting differences, rather than just discipline matrix outcomes.

We hope to have made it clear that we do not take a Manichaean position. We do not place ourselves in a good-against-evil fight position, when it comes to curriculum theories and to other world projects. We reason about the need of destabilizing standards and exposing their limits, by deconstructing their fragile structural pillars. Far from proposing mistaken binarisms and a study based on comparisons among curriculum theories available in this field, we draw attention to the fact that ethical-political violence and the imposition of “commons” present different intensities in the most varied political-philosophical positions of curriculum theories and policies, as well as in our own work. We cannot forget that we were also created, introduced in the world and questioned by different projects and concepts of world, subject and knowledge.

We acknowledge that reasoning about issues involving the imposition of the “common” is a hard-working and necessary theoretical exercise, according to which, more than categorizing the “common”, it is interesting taking a deconstructive stand to problematize democratic claims made by common-to-all training projects. Finally, it is precisely because we believe in the inevitable impossibility of closure in cloistered meanings, and because we bet on the potential hyper-politicization of the social struggle (enabled by the appropriation of the herein presented theoretical contributions) that we focus on incorporating this theoretical investment to our research.

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Text received on 5/4/2022

Text approved on 10/26/2022