

Creativity in School: emancipation or instrumentalization?

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ABSTRACT – Creativity in School: emancipation or instrumentalization? In this theoretical essay, creativity and the so-called creativity in school are approached from a critical perspective. For a broad theory, creativity is regarded as a central value in contemporary culture. The point that unites these varied theoretical currents concerns an alleged overcoming of the status of labor toward what is called immaterial labor. In this context, the production of humans takes place in the movement of subjectivity itself in its complexity. In addition, the school, as a place of training, must, according to this new historical framework, respond to the new reality and prepare students to be creative. Both propositions, however, ignore the fact that neither labor is absent from the so-called creative activities nor creativity is foreign to labor. Thus, the current proposals for creativity in school show the same inconsistency as those that support the idea of immaterial labor: they ignore the fact that creativity is a component of social dynamics, that labor is still the foundation of the most diverse social practices, including, of course, the so-called creative activities.

Keywords: Creativity. School. Immaterial Labor. Emancipation. Freedom.

RESUMO – Criatividade na Escola: emancipação ou instrumentalização? Neste ensaio teórico, a criatividade e, especificamente, os debates em torno da criatividade na escola são colocadas em perspectiva crítica. Para uma já vasta teoria, a criatividade é tomada como um valor central na cultura contemporânea e o ponto pacífico de tais variadas correntes teóricas diz respeito a uma alegada superação do estatuto do trabalho em direção ao que é chamado de trabalho imaterial. Nesse cenário, a produção dos humanos se realiza em fazer movimentar a própria subjetividade em sua complexidade. Moto contínuo, a escola, como local de formação, deve, segundo esse quadro histórico, responder à nova realidade e preparar os estudantes para serem criativos. Ambas as proposições, todavia, ignoram o fato de que nem o trabalho se ausenta das chamadas atividades criativas, nem a criatividade é estranha ao trabalho. Assim, as propostas correntes de criatividade na escola padecem do mesmo mal daquelas que sustentam a ideia de trabalho imaterial: ignoram o fato de que a criatividade é um componente da dinâmica social, de que o trabalho ainda é fundamento das práticas sociais mais diversas, inclusive, por óbvio, nas chamadas atividades criativas.

Palavras-chave: Criatividade. Escola. Trabalho Imaterial. Emancipação. Liberdade.

Introduction

One of the main characteristics of contemporary culture is the fact that creativity and its intrinsic relationship with innovation have achieved status of ethical foundation. If neither the idea of innovation nor that of creativity are new as prevailing values of the social production mode, the novelty, as John Howkins (2013) had already pointed out – uncritically, actually – lies in the coordination between them as an economic asset. This approach occurred by a confluence of factors that boosted the formation of a new dynamics of social, cultural, and economic processes and models, phenomena that come close to and complement each other: globalization, the new media, and the decline of economic models focused on the logic of growth – or progress. Instead, the concept of development emerges, understood, according to the words of Amartya Sen (2004), as the expansion of the capacity that individuals possess to make their own decisions in a conscious manner. This conception is in line with a new frontier of wealth generation, based on *intelligence*, especially that recognized as the silicon supply chain economy. In fact, authors such as Castells (2007) and Gorz (2005) are peremptory in saying that, with the information, communication, or network society, we live in a new era of capitalism or even the beginning of a new mode of production. Although objection can be made, it is undeniable the fact that contemporary capitalism has in the immaterial – being restricted to the expression of Gorz, but which can be translated as creativity and innovation – the status of primary productive force.

Being creative is in relation with the individual as being innovative is in relation with the collectivities; both are almost a truism, a kind of categorical imperative. This requirement is interesting: transformed into models to be followed, their relationship and the very conception of creativity and innovation are instrumentalized. According to this system of moral obligation, it is vital to be innovative – which, in the automatic gathering of syntagmata, implies being creative. Disregarding the evident contradiction between creativity and automatism, numerous manuals on how to innovate have emerged. Almost always they focus on the need to transition from a competitive performance that depends on the capacity to produce standardized goods and services to a competitive performance that depends on the capacity to produce innovative goods and services, of technological frontier, efficiently and *sustainably*. Anyway, this logic was somewhat colonized by the capitalist instrumental rationality and loses sight of human freedom as a purpose of every action. Creativity is required for all spheres of human life – normative creativity, obviously, established by the mode of production that sponsors it.

This debate is also present very fiercely in the school environment: creativity has never been so discussed in schools. Creativity in the school environment, ways to foster it, overcoming practices that inhibit it, and the development of measurements for research on creativity have for some time been part of the concerns of educators and psychologists. However, studies on the subject have intensified in recent

years, even in Brazil, as in the case of Alencar (2002; 2007); Fleith (2007); Starko (1995); Wechsler (2002). In spite of nuances, most researches focus on an instrumental understanding of creativity, defining it based on a framework – conceptually hegemonic – according to which being creative responds to specific and unique demands of a *new world*, of which creativity is a driving force. The school, a formal education institution, must then, mandatorily, foster creative talents in individuals.

The question that remains is: do the latest theoretical concerns really deal with creativity? On the other hand, does the creativity claimed in the school environment foster creative individuals? This text, although incipient, is aimed to propose a discussion of these questions, if not answer them. To that end, this theoretical essay is structured, at first, based on reflections on the concept – and current value – of creativity. However, the purpose, more than determining the problem, is an attempt to conduct a critical approach to what emerges as the foundation of the contemporary *ethos* of creativity: the so-called immaterial labor. Then, after trying to follow the evolution of the concept and practice of formal education, we seek, in a close dialogue especially with Paulo Freire, to understand the idea of creativity in the school environment. Here, the effort is to conduct a critical analysis of the thought that merely takes the instrumental conception of creativity from the *market* to the school – a sort of transfusion that denotes what Paulo Freire called *banking concept of education*. In contrast, it seeks to refute what in this text is understood as a false dichotomy: emancipation or adherence to the logic of instrumentalized creativity. Strictly speaking, what we seek to discuss is: the strong advocacy of the emergence of a new social value, creativity, as a synthesis between social production and construction of subjectivity only makes sense with a critique of this belief. Otherwise, such synthesis is not possible due to the absence of an elementary condition for the establishment of subjectivity: emancipation.

Dawn of Creativity, Twilight of Labor

The subject of creativity, as previously pointed out in the introduction to this text, has achieved status of centrality, addressed as the only contemporary productive force capable of promoting individual well-being and social development. This thought is widespread in contemporary ideology, but can be translated by the already mentioned work of John Howkins (2013), *The Creative Economy*, with a suggestive subtitle *How People Make Money from Ideas*.

Howkins is not an isolated case of instrumentalization of creativity. On the contrary, this instrumental appropriation of creativity is a common practice in an increasingly vast literature available on the subject. And it could not be otherwise, since the logic that sustains the capitalist mode of production is not only supported by a blatant form of instrumentalization of life: it is its own condition. The perverse consequences of this logic have been object of criticism for more than a century, but here it is still necessary to point out: it is not just about making

human ethics unviable. It is about setting the very system in perpetual crisis, with the intensification of those perverse consequences, since the instrumentalization, without understanding of the historical and geographical aspects, deprives the social being of ontological complexity. In other words: the instrumental logic, almost completely deterministic, at times focuses on atomized subjects, at other times on an elusive social mechanics, by which those subjects are required to plan their lives.

The contemporary panacea concerning creativity ignores two aspects of the phenomenon, in defining it as a novelty of our times. The first aspect is that the entire modernist discourse – including the post-modernist –, from the Cartesian *cogito* (Descartes, 1996), to the Kantian transcendental subject (Kant, 2005); from the Nietzschean will to power (Nietzsche, n.d), to the curious ironist of Richard Rorty (2007), is defined by the quest for the escape against the determinations of nature and traditions, that is, the quest for self-determination of the human. In a nutshell: the quest for creativity as human ethical principle. In this path, what is seen is the effort to overcome the so-called metaphysics of the subject; overcoming such metaphysics entails conceiving the human not as a stable entity, but as a multifaceted one built by dynamic social processes. Quite rarely, however, the human in its uniqueness ceased to be the objective, relegating the historical processes to mere abstract formulation.

Anyway, and this is the second aspect ignored by the theories of creativity as human *resource*, the multiple modernist conceptions indicate precisely that creativity concerns a human ontological principle. It is true, on the other hand, that some theories developed on the subject have been struggling to overcome the mere instrumentalization, although, perhaps due to the general theoretical framework that provides the background to the discussions and conceptions, at most they manage to achieve ambiguity. This is not little considering the raw instrumentalization of most theoretical production, as seen with John Howkins. An example of this somewhat failed attempt – or is this a simulation of attempt? – to avoid the instrumentalization of creativity is found in the recent best seller *Vale do Silício: entenda como funciona a região mais inovadora do planeta* [Silicon Valley: understand how the most innovative region of the planet works], by the Brazilian-born writer living in the USA Reinaldo Normand (2015, p. 52-53), according to whom:

Innovation arises from dissent, experimentation, errors, and from the questioning of authority. Without a culture that tolerates freedom of thoughts, ideas, and beliefs, innovation does not happen. Thinking outside the box requires these basic ingredients. Innovation requires autonomy and absence of micro management. It is necessary to create an informal culture and an environment without censorship, where there is complete freedom of expression and action to opine, disagree, and try different paths. Entrepreneurs, academics, scientists, and em-

employees should feel free and loose. They should know that their creations can impact the world in a positive way. No idea can be censored. It is extremely important to have a support system in which those responsible for innovation can obtain feedback from the ecosystem without fear of being ridiculed.

It seems clear the confluence between the ideas of this Brazilian, saying from the center of creativity as economic asset in the USA, and the palimpsest of postmodern discourse that forges the multifaceted subjectivity and that is, itself, the responsible for the strength of contemporary creativity, conceived by Richard Rorty (2007). Our interest here is not in the theoretical debate on such conceptions, but it is important to note that, although self-titled as pragmatist project, such conceptions lack principle of reality. However, it cannot be denied that access to diversity and democratic coexistence is essential to creativity, because they are foundations for the construction of an ethics based on freedom.

Another example, this one far more sophisticated, of the ambiguity between instrumentalization and ontological understanding of creativity is present in the conceptions of neuroscientist Tina Seelig (2012), known for her courses on the so-called *design thinking*, innovation, and creativity, for future entrepreneurs at Stanford University, also in Silicon Valley. To develop her theory, Seelig presents what she called *Innovation Machine*, which comprises, on its internal facet – and, therefore, attributed to the historical subject –, the characteristics of knowledge, imagination, and attitude. Each of these characteristics overlaps the others, that is, albeit autonomous, they are interdependent spheres. On its exterior facet, Seelig's *machine* brings the also interdependent elements resources, *habitat* and culture. Obviously, Seelig attributes, to the *functioning* of the *machine*, a movement of interdependence between the external facet and the internal facet and vice versa.

The merit of Tina Seelig's conception lies precisely in the tension that permeates her machine: subjectivity is conceived as unstable, always under construction, but there is also the inevitability of what might be called reality, which is also in continuous movement of construction and deconstruction, in this realization. Equally, it is inevitable to conceive the singular in tension with the totality; the essence in tension with the appearance; the content, with the form; the ethics, with the aesthetics.

Although it is taken as a sort of guide to the economics of innovation and creativity, it is interesting to note that the work of Tina Seelig shuns the mere instrumentalization. One might even notice a parallel between Seelig and the work of Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who, based on the Marxian dialectical materialism, conceived his theory of cognition – and creativity.

Vygotsky's initial effort was to counter the bourgeois-liberal conception of creativity and, in his studies on the cognitive process, especially in childhood, he opposed the theory that creativity is merely a

satisfactory factor resulting from imagination and pleasure. In his book *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood* (1930), Vygotsky (2001) already highlighted that the activity of combining and creating is an essential human attribute, which enables objectification of subjectivities, as results of creative processes. He points out that the bases for this capacity of creation are in the combination of memory and desire, driven by the necessity of adaptation:

The brain is not only the organ that stores and retrieves our previous experience, it is also the organ that combines and creatively reworks elements of this past experience [...]. It is precisely human creative activity that makes the human being a creature oriented toward the future, creating the future and thus altering his own present (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 9).

Therefore, when developing their creative mind, says Vygotsky, humans accumulate experiences in order to develop their imagination and creativity, in a sort of repertoire, so as to be able to analyze the new and transform it. Thus, the better the conditions for construction of the repertoire, the more developed is the creative capacities of the individual:

The richer a person's experience, the richer is the material his imagination has access to. [...] The implication of this for education is that, if we want to build relatively strong foundation for a child's creativity, what we must do is broaden the experiences we provide him with (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 17-18).

If, in fact, there is correspondence between the theories on creativity and innovation and the thought of Vygotsky, an obvious detail sets them in opposition: the Belarusian thinker does not conceive creativity as a chimera, nor the complexity of reality as an abstraction. What is amid Vygotsky's formulations are the material conditions that allow the cognitive – and creative – development of humans and the assumption, as compelling reality, that the capitalist mode of production is unfair in the distribution of such conditions and opportunities. Therefore, the point is to understand the ontological principle of labor as the human ethical foundation – of which creativity is an inextricable component. It is interesting, then, that the instrumentalization of creativity occurs in the wake of the disregard of labor as human ethical foundation – and this is precisely the effort of theories that understand creativity as the central element of the contemporary world, which is translated into the discussions about the so-called immaterial labor.

In fact, the theorists that proposed the concept of immaterial labor – which, it is worth insisting, is the same of the centrality of creativity – are based on division between *material* labor, in which there is alienation, lack of subjectivity, and damnation, and *immaterial* labor, which, on the contrary, is the reign of non-alienated subjectivity and of rewarding effort – or, in the words of Lazzarato and Negri (2001, p. 46-47),

If production today is directly production of social relationship, the 'raw material' of immaterial labor is the subjectivity and 'ideological environment' in which this subjectivity lives and is reproduced. Then, the production of subjectivity ceases to be only an instrument of social control (by reproduction of the market relations) and becomes directly productive, because in our post-industrial society its goal is to build the consumer/communicator. And build it 'active'.

The Italian authors, as well as the French André Gorz and others, are based on a very particular reading of *Grundrisse*, by Marx (2011), to support their theory: according to it, labor would no longer be the reason for human sociality; on the contrary, to support its thesis, the theory invariably is based on idealism, which understands human life and provides it with significance only abstractly and from the point of view of abstraction. Perpetual motion, it is apprehended that spheres of what the Marxian theory understands as superstructure – the politics, the ethics, or the language – are comprehended in strictly autonomous manner in relation to the material life in general, and very specifically in relation to labor. Moreover, according to this conception, they are the ideal spheres and the only ones able to provide human life with the solutions for the problems, almost always material – and surely always lived materially –, that arise.

Indeed, immaterial labor theorists seem to conceive labor as punishment and submission to an alien power – and, in this case, foreign to any creativity. The conclusion reached is simple: released from the bounds concerning labor – which once punished and subjected the human to a sphere of absence of creativity –, contemporary knowledge cannot be objectified, useful, or *instrumental*. According to Gorz (2005, p. 20), for instance, “[...] Differently from the *courante* conceptions, knowledge, here, does not appear as an objectified knowledge, composed of distinct types of knowledge and information, but as social activity that builds communicative relationships that are not subject to a command”.

Nevertheless, according to these theories, the production sphere has not become strictly and simply a communicative process; it would be more of a social process that gives form to the subjects and thus, necessarily, to the objects of production. Therefore, and such theories are founded on this *discovery*, the result of the social process of production continues to be the objectification of physical and intellectual human forces – the Marxian legacy was only re-inverted, in justice to what Marx had done in relation to Hegel. In conducting such undertaking, however, the theories of immaterial labor – and of creativity, innovation, and communication – ignore the character of the ontology of the social being that is the foundation of the Marxian thought. According to Marx, it is not only impossible to *suspend* the labor, but it is also impossible to take it as an exclusive sphere, unrelated to subjectivity, creativity, communication: precisely the totality of the production of human life.

It is from this theoretical amalgam – which, in our view, is based on misguided readings and displaced understandings about human ethics – that arises both the contemporary centrality of creativity and the increasing requirement of creativity in school. As will be seen next, and as previously argued, this requirement is based on ethical foundations that are foreign to the social dynamics. However, it seems that there are no misconceptions: creativity taken instrumentally is part of a social project in which humans, in their majority, they themselves, are instruments of the capitalist mode of production.

School: emancipation or bestialization

Although the school as an institution has undergone several transformations in space-time, in the teaching-learning process there is a dynamics that remains and that is structured in three distinct but complementary moments, namely: (i) education, which is recognized as a process that interacts with changes at the root of the knowledge of each individual; (ii) teaching, which strives in introducing humans in general to the set of cultural artifacts, in order to propagate and expand the accumulated human knowledge; and, finally, (iii) training, which is focused on the repetition of actions, aiming at the development of specific skills. Thus, education is presented as dynamics that triggers desires and needs of change or strengthening of lifestyles, and of interpretation of what is around each individual in the process of identification and understanding of what is significant and representative for your well-being and your subjectivity. Feelings, emotions, and sensitivities are predominant in it as agents that trigger interpersonal relationships and relations with different environmental contexts and instances. On its turn, teaching is defined as human action involved with the development of knowledge and know-how, aiming at change, expansion, and even creation of new knowledge from those already established. Teaching is presented as dynamics that prioritizes action that is conscious and attested in verifiable bases and in proposals set out with certain objectivity. Teaching in this perspective has preference on epistemology and on technologies and, through it, the individual is shown as one who has knowledge capable of developing tasks and executing processes that require clear and objective information. In teaching, the training for performing and creating different actions inherent to the interpersonal and environmental relations prevails. Finally, in the training step, the aim is that the subject acts with resourcefulness, according to certain pre-established actions, for which the main skill required is the capacity for repetition and memorization.

Therefore, it can be determined that school institutions have focused on the training aspect, since their universalization projects, as a modernist project – and very obviously it is also there that the idea of creativity in school is situated, because of a postmodernist *project*. This is, clearly, what Paulo Freire (1996; 2011) calls banking education, according to which the teacher *deposits* knowledge in the minds of the

students, whose subjectivity would be empty. In this practice, the centrality of the process is in the teacher, who would be the bearer of knowledge and have the function of conveying it to students – in a vertical and unilateral relationship. With the predominance of training initiatives, for instance, students have the reading of texts and the mathematical calculations as repetition process, based on memorization of rules and classifying and operational precepts – occurring the same in the other curricular components.

However, according to Freire, education has an emancipatory potential, if the education aspect were prioritized in its initiatives – and in this case, resuming the center of the debate in this text, then the learning subjects would be creative, and their practice would be based on curiosity:

Among us, men and women, inconclusion is known as such. Moreover, inconclusion, which recognizes itself, necessarily implies the introduction of the unfinished subject in a permanent social process of search. Historical, social, and cultural, men and women make us beings whose curiosity, crossing the limits that are peculiar to them in the vital domain, become fundamental in the production of knowledge. Furthermore, curiosity is knowledge already (Freire, 1996, p. 32).

Following the path opened by the Freirean thought, the emancipatory school would be an institution that would assume responsibility for the political character of its actions, that is, it understands the particular dynamics of the school as an environment of the community consisting of teachers, students, staff, family members, and the society in which it is situated. In this context, the emancipatory school is manifested as a milieu in which knowledge arises from the demands generated by the community and the focus is on the change of processes that dehumanize and generate marginalization, oppression, and misery. In the emancipatory school, evaluations are characterized as dynamics for diagnosis of the processes developed and in the qualitative importance of the knowledge and know-how to the lives of the people involved, and not in the amount of knowledge that is retained and measurable. It seems clear, therefore, that there is a clear association between creativity and emancipation, but the contemporary task of making school activities creative tends to repeat the *banking* environment, which ultimately denies creativity itself.

The result of the operations for prioritization of training, instead of education, situates the school, thus, in a real dilemma: the rise of debates about creativity in school, in instrumental frameworks, is just a symptom. The crisis that education has undergone in recent decades can be determined since the known *MacBride Report* (MacBride et al., 1987), produced by Unesco in the 1970s, and which, considering the new social role acquired by the media, claims a new school, but, strictly speaking, puts on hold the very existence of the school as a place of education, teaching, and training. It makes sense: the school, as the media

culture, is taken based on practices of standardization of a standard content for whatever receivers. Even though we cannot lose sight of the mediation processes by which a multiplicity of meanings is produced by the diversity of cultural matrices, nor is it possible to close our eyes to the limits imposed by the agencies of the symbolic production organized by a media sector under increasingly oligopolization, which spans from the global to the local. Thus, in fact, the culture resulting from the complexification of the media system has situated the school in a deep crisis: is the strict space of formal education able to respond to the dynamics of knowledge construction? If the task is to train, would not the media system be more appropriate and effective, as it is more used to the cultural dynamics?

The outcome of these questions is the reason for the scathing criticism – and whose controversy will not be treated in this text – by Peter Sloterdijk (2000): massification is a way of limiting the information only to those who would use it aiming at the establishment of power, in a process of human *bestialization*. In dialogue with Nietzsche and his *philosophy with a hammer*, Sloterdijk (2000, p. 47) says:

He [Nietzsche] takes as measure the remote millennial processes by which, thanks to an intimate intertwining of creation, domestication, and education, the production of human beings has so far been undertaken—an undertaking, it is true, that knew to stay mostly invisible and which, under the mask of the school, aimed at the project of domestication.

This domestication of the human takes place not only in the physical and structural manner of the environment, but especially in the didactics employed in teaching, generating a teaching that is not aimed at the autonomy of students. In fact, this teaching goes against autonomy, which leads to a lack of stimulation to creativity in the course of the school life. Moreover, it is structured based on the *technicization* or *instrumentalization* of knowledge, no longer generating humans capable of conducting their own path as citizens or inducing their own reflection, but workers prepared from their early years, either to be the best in their fields – like robots programmed by the labor market – or, which is more common, as repeaters of knowledge under the agency of the holders of economic, political, and symbolic powers. Here lies the contradiction of the heralds of creativity in school.

Creativity in School: misconceptions and potential

As mentioned throughout this text, academic researches addressing the need to develop creativity in school do that based on an instrumental understanding of creativity, defining it as a response to specific and unique demands of a *new world*, of which creativity is a categorical imperative. In fact, one of the researches, when justifying itself, claims:

Creativity is present in the several segments of human life, in particular in the fields of labor and education, con-

stituting an essential resource so the individual can face the conflicts, tensions, and demands of the contemporary world effectively. This world, as we all know, is characterized by constant challenges posed by globalization, globalization of culture, provisional character of knowledge, and continuous changes in labor and production relations (Oliveira; Alencar, 2010, p. 246).

Furthermore, the authors emphasize the need to understand the development of creativity in school as an operation that surpasses the merely cognitive aspect. This is an operation of interaction with the socio-historical context, and the school, in general, has emptied and trivialized the practices of creativity, even because, traditionally, it is “[...] excessively oriented to the past, emphasizing the reproduction of knowledge and the memorization of teachings” (Oliveira; Alencar, 2010, p. 246). It should not be discussed the pragmatic character of the perception of the new historical-cultural and economic framework that is supported precisely on the immaterial value – although, in this perspective, there is not the necessary criticism of the theoretical framework that supports it. It is also not improper the authors’ criticism of the excessive formalism of traditional pedagogical practices, of the underlying criticism of the priority given to *training* by schools, which lose sight not only of the contents of such practices, learning for the present world, but also of the constraints and prospects that should be open, to the world, through the educational process. What is discussed in this type of approach to creativity in school is the type of organization that justifies it: the context of capitalist globalization, which is based on the dematerialization of culture, production, and wealth. The approaches show no effort to relativize the consequences of this historical framework; it is only based on the positive finding that, if we are in that framework, and if it requires creativity, we must be creative. There is also no criticism of the threat to democracy arising from this imperative of creativity and innovation, whose result is, paradoxically, a mechanization of being creative and either an emptying of innovative practices or their very mechanization, due to their utilitarianism as commodity, whose focus is always the individual, isolated from the collective that conforms it.

It is no coincidence that, in a sort of inventory of Brazilian research about creativity in school, Solange Wechsler (2001), one of the references of this kind of research in Brazil, comprises almost exclusively researches that apply the so-called Torrance model (1996) which seeks to measure the indicators, through individual tests, of creativity in students and educators. Without addressing the merits of the model, seeking to measure creativity through tests seems symptomatic: at the very least, there is a closed conception of creativity, as well as its exclusivity to processes, usually detached from concrete historical frameworks, of a kind of creativity.

It is also no coincidence that the criticism to the traditional school refers to a type of individual freedom for creativity and, thus, claims that the very pedagogical processes are founded on this type of free-

dom. As noted by Roselane Campos and Eneida Shiroma (1999), this is a revival of the so-called *New School*, a movement which emerged in the 1930s that promoted the need for a centrality of individual freedom in educational processes, against the *mechanical* procedures of traditional school. The authors observe in this revival the privatizing logic focused on market liberalism, which has grown in Brazil from the 1990s.

One of the fiercest critics of the *New School*, either in its original version or in this renovated one, is educator Demerval Saviani (1985). According to him, the *New School* is essentially undemocratic, not only because it focuses its concepts on the development of the individual – disregarding its inextricable pole, the collectivity –, but mainly because the proposed development and freedom are not based on the potential of all individuals, but only of those to whom the development model is intended. That is: creativity is limited to some observed talents; all other talents are either excluded or, which is the same thing, fall within what was considered the true creative talent. In a recent article, Saviani advocates, against the *new pedagogy* of the *new school*, that the school institution is a cultural place of science and that, as such, should discuss the views of common wisdom. Based on this, the educator conducts a harsh criticism of school activities that disregard the *place of science* that the school is. He says, in an interesting example, but no less hard:

For some time, the idea that the curriculum is the set of activities developed by the school has been disseminated. Therefore, curriculum differs from program or list of disciplines; according to this definition, curriculum is everything the school does; thus, it would not make sense to speak of extracurricular activities. Recently, I was led to correct this definition by adding the complement 'core'. With this amendment the definition, provisionally, would be the following: curriculum is the set of core activities developed by the school. And why is that? Because, if everything that happens in the school is curriculum, if the difference between curricular and extracurricular is erased, then everything acquires the same weight; and it opens the way to all sorts of deviations, inversions, and confusions that deprive the school work of its characteristics. With that, easily, the secondary can take the place of what is primary, consequently shifting to the sphere of accessory those activities that constitute the purpose of the school. It should be noted that this phenomenon can be easily observed in the daily routine of schools. I will give just one example: the school year starts in mid-February and already in March we have the week of the revolution; then, Holy week, then the mothers' week, the June celebrations, the soldier's week, folklore week, nation's week, the spring games, children's week, indigenous people week, etc., airplane's week... and then we are in November. The school year ends, and we are facing the following fact: everything was done at school; time was found for every kind of celebration, but very little time was assigned to the process of transmission-assimilation of systemized

knowledge. This means that they lost sight of the core activity of school, that is, the transmission of tools to access developed knowledge (Saviani, 2015, p. 288-289).

Leaving the controversy to another time and place – Saviani, at least in the featured excerpt, is based on the *training* vertex for his definition of priority of educational activity –, it is easy to see that these activities that deviate the primary school activity are used to justify the development of creativity in school, which, in this case, becomes, as the very activities, accessory, and not ontologically constitutive of the human. It is important to stress here that the criticism of the focus on the individual occurs not because the individual and their uniqueness should be ignored; on the contrary: the uniqueness can only be effectively understood and developed if the collective frameworks of which it is part are understood. Dealing with creativity in school, thus, implies not merely accepting or refusing the status of the individual, but seeing it in perspective: if the strength of historical subjects is fundamental to the social fabric, they can only act – and can only have their creativity fully developed – if they are subjects whose individual strength lies in being a historical and social subject. That is how it seems elusive both the transfusion of creativity from the *world* to the school – because, in this instrumental perspective, there is, simply, no development of creativity –, and the allegedly emancipatory conceptions' denial of the current historical framework, which has in the ideology of creativity one of its foundations. Here, emancipation means developing creative subjects in a world that has in creativity another obstacle to creativity and emancipation.

Final Remarks

The very idea of creativity as a value seems a misconception. Although the theories about creativity and how to *conquer it* deal with an interposition of the potent subjectivity of men and women to conquer their own life, despite the control operations imposed by the capitalist dynamics, the way this subjectivity is built is not set in perspective. Even worse: to be justified, the concept of *immaterial labor*, which supports the idea of creativity as a value, opposes labor as basic human element, from which creativity is inextricable. Denying the status of labor is denying the conditions, potential, and hindrances so men and women can express themselves and find their place in the world in accordance with their talent, with their creativity.

This seems to be the same problem of the conception about creativity in school: it is assumed that it, creativity, is an imperative of the contemporary world and that as a result the school should be prepared to develop creative individuals. In this case, the misconception is twofold: there is no criticism of the assumption of creativity as value, nor about the school's place in contemporary society – or, if there is, it should be assumed here, it is a conception of school that contradicts the very idea of creativity, since, although the discourse is designed to encourage the creativity of students and deny the *banking school*, it is

lost in initiatives that are strange to the school institution and it is conducted based on a mechanical and preformed idea of creativity.

Here, we need again to resort to the thought of Paulo Freire (1996; 2011), according to whom education cannot and should not be treated as something that simply reproduces the current social practices, because, in so doing, it would be reproducing the current exclusion and oppression strategies. Now there is also the opportunity to clarify the dialogue, held surreptitiously throughout the text, with Lukács' ontology of the social being (2012; 2013). According to the Hungarian philosopher, the dissolution of the singular in the totality and the fragmentation of the totality are forged in the same misconception: both do not make see the humans in the act of making history, albeit in a silent way, in conditions they did not choose and whose results are far from the one they chose for them in their individual actions. Because, as the Hungarian philosopher points out, the individual and society, individuality and history are equally actual poles (albeit distinct) of the social process; there is no way to understand the social life if we disregard any of the two poles. It is there, and only there, that creativity can be developed: for human emancipation, as human emancipation. Therefore, the point is not to think of creativity or bestialization, in an excluding manner: this is a false dilemma. Creativity is only possible for humans with full capacity to understand and transform, with their peers, the surrounding environment. According to the school, educating free humans necessarily means being creative – and there is no alternative on the horizon.

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