GOVERNMENTALITY AND THE ARTS THAT MATTER: PRODUCING THE CONFORMED, FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE PUPIL SINCE THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to describe the historical derivations, continuities and displacements that have led to the widely accepted contemporary narratives, adopted by governmental entities and international policymakers, concerning the benefits of the arts to education and the constitution of personal identity. We further attempt to unveil the strategic purposes of a *biopower*, which, at its very origin, efficiently correlated the promotion and inculcation of artistic values with the normalization of infant and child populations. To this end, we propose an analysis of two historical moments – the turn of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century – in which aesthetic experiences, practices of the *self* and governmental rationalities were articulated in order to produce specific kinds of social actors and manage their fates.

Keywords: Governmentality; History of arts education; Technologies of the self; Educational policies; Pupil as artist.

1. INTRODUCTION

By using a *history of the present* approach (Foucault, 1995, p. 31), this article seeks to identify the historical derivations, shifts and continuities that have led to the consensual contemporary narratives, espoused by governmental entities and international policymakers, concerning the benefits of the arts to education and the constitution of personal identity. To this end, we have opted to describe two chronological moments – the present day and the turn of the 20th century – in which aesthetic experiences, practices of the self and governmental rationalities were articulated in order to produce specific kinds of social actors and manage their futures. These will be analysed in the following four sections of the text.

We begin by briefly situating this topic in the present day, describing the pupil-artist as a self-constituted and continuously self-actualizing prospective subject whose *raison d'être* entails creativity, social skills, open-mindedness and problem-solving abilities. This set of competencies is deemed as necessary in order to cultivate flexibility and adaptability to social and economic uncertainty, newly developed functions and professions, contexts and structures.

We then move on to a genealogical analysis of modern practices of subjectivation, based on Michel Foucault's insight regarding the remote historical processes – dating back to antiquity and the problem of the *care of the self* (Foucault, 1986) – through which the domains of ethics and politics came to be connected and interweaved. This segment explores the interplay of governmentality and *technologies of the self* in the formation of the modern state, emphasizing a notion that would eventually prevail both in the political and educational realms: that one can only govern or *conduct the conduct of free and autonomous subjects*, that is, subjects who exercise a reflexive sovereignty over themselves and, in doing so, are driven to freely conform to the prevalent moral principles of their time. *Biopower*, or the extension of statecraft to all aspects of human life (Foucault, 1978, p. 139), would thus be inextricably linked to the *government of the soul*.

Following this, we rediscover the connection between creative practices, care of the self and public policies in the period between the latter part of the eighteen hundreds and the mid-20th century, where it appeared in the context of the development of modern schooling and, specifically, in relation to the problem of turning the child into a pupil and the latter into a suitable citizen. Here, the genealogical gaze allows us to observe the pupil-artist, whose roots could be traced back to the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Ó, 2003, 2019; Vallera, 2019), as it was being strategically problematized within psycho-pedagogical discourse and the new educational paradigm of *self-government*. The school subject was to become an active participant in its own educational process, which now included arts and crafts as a paramount tool in the development of the child's physical, psychic and intellectual capabilities. Producing the *citizen to be*, in these circumstances, meant bringing about a voluntary

conformity to the democratic-liberal ideal and envisaging the future as a mere projection of existing institutions.

Lastly, we return to the first moment, the 21st century, to examine these incorporated principles of self-discipline as they are now connected, most notably in the rhetoric produced by international policymakers such as OECD and UNESCO, to a wide range of *transformative competencies* specifically modeled on the artist's abilities, practices and attributes. The creative and artistic *ethos*, rather than simply an instrument, became the very paradigm through which the pupil is projected into an undetermined future fraught with change and ambiguity.

2. THE CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE THAT ARTS DO AND MATTER

The idea that "the arts *do*" – whether it is improving achievement or making us better individuals – seems to dominate recent debates on art education and education in general (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013, p. 213). As such, it is presumed that there is a relationship between the arts and learning and an implicit association between causes and desired effects (Baldacchino, 2014). *The rhetoric of effects*, that is, the stance in favour of the use of art in learning processes, is "always caught in a positivist logic that enforces the prevailing normative and technocratic view of education, reinstating the same social hierarchies reproduced through traditional schooling" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013, p. 213). If art is instrumentalized and notions of creativity and criticality are used to instruct, they don't oppose the principle of *enforced stultification* (Rancière, 1991), but conserve the existing system as a theory of change and social progress (Popkewitz, 2020). Even though this paradox in the relation between arts and education has been recognized, there seems to be no consensus on possible alternatives. Moreover, any critical discussion of values appropriated by practical utilitarian discourse appears to be hindered by the rhetoric of *good intentions (ibidem)*. Whether art is supported through intrinsic or instrumentalist approaches, namely, arguments that assert that "the presence of the arts enhances individual experiences and perceptions of the world", through the *aesthetic experience*, or "that injecting the arts can improve academic achievement", civic engagement or social cohesion, the importance is always placed on the inherent value of arts in education (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013, p. 212). And even if, as some researchers recognize, it is not possible to measure and evaluate the effects of arts on overall scholarly performance (Baldacchino, 2008; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013), it is taken as granted that the arts matter for their own sake; more so, they allow "to achieve heightened levels of ethical attainment" (Reimer, 2007, p. 1225). This assumption is based on the intuition, "amounting almost to a faith, that creating art, of any sort and of any style" is an endeavour intimately entailing ethical behaviour, through the practice of artistic decision-making, that seems to be driven by a special sort of sincerity, genuineness and clarity of purpose (*ibidem*, pp. 1225-6). The transformative and reflexive consequences of aesthetic encounters may

be individual or collective; in either case, artistic experience includes practices that both create and critique new knowledge, and transfigure human understanding (Sullivan, 2007). Both arguments, in favour of arts as enhancing problem-solving and creative capacities or as a purely aesthetic experience, are legitimized through the application of psychological theories that entail cultural and social principles about modes of life (Popkewitz, 2020).

Aesthetic narratives in educational policies facilitate the constitution of self-referential practices, that is *identity policies*, and, as Stuart Hall observed, precisely because identities are constructed within, and not outside, discourse, we need to understand them "as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies" (1996, p. 4). The construction of identity, in late-modern societies, became visible as a problem, because the determination of social standing was replaced with compulsive and obligatory *self-determination*. In other words, identity could no longer be seen as *given* and had instead become a task (Bauman, 2008). The constitution of identity policies is also a way of categorization and abjection, since, as Judith Butler demonstrated, all identities operate through exclusion, the discursive production of an "outside" (1993, p. 22).

Paradoxically, the definitions that imply and govern the appearance of new identities - for example *artrepreneurs*, who are described as industrious, playful, and flexible in response to ever changing socio-environmental demands and fragmentation (Kalin, 2018) -, are constructed in such a way that no aberration is allowed. The stereotypical bohemian mode of living of an artist combines the possibility of joining leisure and work, where "the notions of flexibility and mobility emerge historically from the tradition of the 'drop-out' established by generations of artists who sought to resist modernism's dictums of discipline and rationalization" (von Osten, 2012, p. 88). In this way, the social status of artists is used to convey a vision of labour as an autonomous, independent form of living and working, indeed a higher and more ethical form of work – "the figure of the artist seems to be the point of reference for this new understanding of the relation between life and work, and for mediating it to broader audience" *(ibidem*, p. 87). Their precarious professional situation has thus been discursively reformulated into a desirable economic model. Although the classification of the artist has shifted from being an exceptional subject to becoming the desired citizen of the future, there is a double gesture embedded in the rhetoric of the artistic way of living: of *presumed freedom* and *impossibility to choose otherwise*. The idealized vision of artistic existence became a frame of reference to discuss the future of work and the constitution of modern identities.

Problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, versatility, networking, inventiveness and decentralization of structures equivalent to artistic practice are commodified competencies of intangible labour put to efficient use (Kalin, 2018). *Artrepreneurs, cultural-preneurs* or *inno-preneurs* resemble the "stereotype of the artist as lone genius or heroic individual" (Relyea, 2013, p. 81; Martins, 2011), in that they are self-reliant, run on

ambition and self-initiative. However, "the subject conceptualized in this way holds itself in ready dependency to every situation and is 'trained' in the sense of having its abilities rationalized in strict conformity to the moment" (von Osten, 2012, p. 86). Individuals in this new creative class must operate as their own entrepreneurial managers, passionately combining work and life, creativity and productivity, risk-taking and responsibility, innovation and efficiency, adaptability and self-actualization – they must be the creators of the future and the *designers of their own lives*.

What characterizes the discourse on the future of labour is mediated into international educational policies and frameworks, that define the values and principles necessary for the citizen of the 21st century and translate them into a set of skills, referred to as *transformative competencies*. The transition to *transformative competencies* and *consequently transformative pedagogies* indicates the ongoing shift of the 19th century axiom of the integral education of the pupil-citizen into compulsive self-formation and continuous self-actualization of the pupil-artist. If at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries the concern was to prepare a pupil for citizenship (Ó, 2003), it seems that the concern at the turn of the 21st century is the adaptation of the citizen to social and economic uncertainty, new functions and professions, contexts and structures. As observed by Stiegler (2010), "a taste for serious music (that one played as an amateur), frequent visits to theatre and opera, knowledge of art history and practice (chiefly through museums), love of reading, and so on", previously seen as a "privilege exclusively available to the bourgeoisie created in the nineteenth century", became the politics "of minds [*esprits*] aimed at developing and managing a national spirit [*esprit*] serving a national economy and a national industry, guaranteeing the possibility of individual social advancement" (p. 175).

The concept of creativity has been distanced from *high creativity*, associated with "elitism and notions of the exceptional and the gifted", to *democratic creativity*, characterized as "the imaginative events and productions of ordinary people, the masses of the populace" (Adams & Owens 2016, p. 14). In this way, it is employed as a sort of intelligence or merit (Martins, 2020), and, conversely, intellectual capacity is linked to being creative or not being creative. Moreover, it is presented as a learnable quality, thus art education and skills associated with artistic practice are advocated as a way to compensate for the inequality of traditionally defined intelligence and as an opportunity to contribute productively to society.

3. THE REMOTE LINEAGE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

Some of the considerations raised by the "later" Foucault, particularly in his three volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, are essential to this discussion. There, the French philosopher-historian developed an analytical framework that allows researchers to intersect the domains of ethics and politics and discern the foundations on which modern processes of subjectivation have been constructed. Foucault's work

during this period invites us to connect systems of knowledge, modalities of power and the self's relation to itself in a single logical sequence. To their corresponding forms of analysis – archaeology, genealogy and ethics – were added, in a 1978 course at the Collège de France, the terms "governmentality" and "technologies of the self", which, in tandem, were then used to broadly encapsulate all of his previous work. The concept of governmentality cuts through this entire spectrum by linking together: i) a microphysics of power, including political technologies of the body and disciplinary techniques used in total or closed institutions; ii) the concerns of political sovereignty, directed toward the governance of nation-states and populations; iii) the strategies designed to conduct free individuals, connecting the care of the self to governmental practices.

Governmentality, in a sense, could be characterized as an art form that brings together a wide range of authorities and agents, as well as an immense variety of techniques and forms of scientific knowledge aimed at evaluating and improving the wealth, health, education, customs and habits of a population. This biopolitical model had been rapidly accelerating since the end of the 18th century. Indeed, the modern state began asserting itself through systems of notation, representation, accumulation, quantification and transfer of information, while continually reinventing new ways of dividing social space and time. These power-knowledge processes gradually shaped an agile apparatus to govern the whole of the nation-state while providing criteria for the ethical enhancement of individuals. The *veridiction* of the state became the truth produced by science, which means its enunciations directly refer to power relations.

Within this interpretive framework, and when referring to *technologies of the self*, Foucault denoted a series of historically situated performative power techniques that induce subjects to act and to implement changes on their own minds and bodies, thoughts and behaviours, in order to bind them to a practice of constant vigilance and adjustment to the reigning moral principles of their time. Subjectivation thus involves self-inhibition exercises connected to governmental policies and forms of scientific knowledge.

This article thus attempts to understand how certain, increasingly hegemonic models of *conducting conduct* have been encoded and diffused within the educational field. By and large, one could say that in modern societies the sphere of morality refers less to universal systems of injunction and prohibition than to a framework of *regulated freedom*. It is exactly this ethical-political project that school systems have sought to develop and broaden to the entire infant and child population. In fact, within every school environment each singularity became a crossing point for power-knowledge relations. Consequently, modernity could well be characterized by the persistent intention to *govern without governing*, amplifying power to its furthest reaches – the choices, decisions and assessments of autonomous subjects.

As mentioned earlier, governmentality is directly linked to the problem of the care of the self. Michel Foucault analysed this practice – inaugurated by Socrates and now generalized – genealogically, by

pinpointing not only its historical foundations but, above all, the different social contexts where it was activated, gained traction or presented itself in new guises. He advocated that we have inherited a social morality established on the basis of a broader shift:

> "There has been an inversion in the hierarchy of the two principles of antiquity, 'Take care of yourself' and 'Know yourself'. In Greco-Roman culture, knowledge of oneself appeared as the consequence of the care of the self. In the modern world, knowledge of oneself constitutes the fundamental principle". (Foucault, 2000, p. 228)

The task here is to understand t*he historical paths through which the cultivation of the self became the ultimate moral occupation*. Foucault asserts that the considerations and ethical judgments concerning pleasures that we carry with us and still recognize today were orchestrated in the early centuries of our era. But he insisted up front on the need to deviate from an analysis based on systems of prohibition. The changes that affected this moral practice do not relate to an increase in severity or to an intensification of interdictions. Instead,

> "the change had much more to do with the manner in which the individual needed to form himself as an ethical subject. The development of the cultivation of the self-produced its effect not in the strengthening of that which can thwart desire, but in certain modifications relating to the formative elements of ethical subjectivity" (Foucault, 1986, p. 67).

Traditional ethics, built on external forms of coercive control, is thus subject to a considerable inflection as a consequence of the intensity of these relations to the self. Modernity has extended a type of ascetic regimen that dates back to the ancient world and manifests itself as a *permanently restless* surveillance, not merely of the subject's individual status, but also of its rational being. *The cultivation of the self is implanted by recognizing that frailty and vulnerability, which characterize individuality, must be opposed through universal principles*. The existence of a single truth – defined by law or reason – is asserted and must be deciphered and conflated with what one does or must do. Foucault contends that the end result of such an elaboration is "defined by the rule of the individual over himself" (Foucault, 1986, p. 68). To achieve this, and for the subject to learn self-control by avoiding the insistent disruptions of desire, an "austere regimen" dominated by "ascetic practices" or "practices of the self" must be deployed: "testing procedures", "self-examination" and "the assessment of a fault in relation to rules of conduct" are enduring and universally discernible attitudes in each and every one of us (*ibidem*, pp. 41, 58-63). Caring for oneself involves, at the outset, the exercise of continually filtering representations – "a technique that will find its apogee in Freud" (Foucault, 2000, p. 240). Subjects must rely on memory to determine their own field of action: self-examining,

inferring which principles should govern their lives and, of course, when required, becoming their own, foremost censors. All internal examinations should assess the "correspondence" between "thoughts" and "reality" (Cartesian), "thoughts" and "rules" (Senecan), as well as between "the hidden thought and an inner impurity" (*ibidem*, p. 247). This third type of examination foreshadows "the Christian hermeneutics of the self with its deciphering of inner thoughts" and its implication that "there is something hidden in ourselves" and that "we are always in a self-illusion that hides the secret" (*ibidem*). The reference to such distinct and chronologically scattered moral and philosophical traditions might, at first glance, render our argument somewhat anachronistic. The goal, however, is to reiterate the idea that derivations based on the principle of caring for oneself had far-reaching repercussions, extending well beyond original doctrines.

The key issue here is that *being*, or the *soul*, can only be perceived as a substance inasmuch as it is understood as a *task* or an *activity*. Thus defined, identity practices are relational in nature. The major historical inquiry individuals are freely obligated to formulate is the following: "Departing from what ground shall I find my identity?" (Foucault, 2000, p. 230). While this practice is not limited to children or young people undergoing socialization – it is rather presented as a lifelong duty –, there is no denying that the relation to oneself is especially trained and reiterated in the pedagogical relationship.

In this respect, both education and socialization processes can be perceived primarily through the prism of liberty. Governmental strategies developed since the mid-to-late 18th century in Europe, initially under the designation of *police* (the "police state" and a corresponding "science of police" or administration), explicitly sought to correlate the direction of free individuals with the sovereign's broader political objectives. In different regions of continental Europe, political theorists' appeals to "establish the internal regulations in such a way that the good order of families, and that of individuals, is entirely connected to the welfare of the state" echoed the words of educational reformers, for whom "enlightened sovereigns would rather govern subjects who serve and obey through love and conviction than those who are swamped in the subservient customs of forced servitude" (Vallera, 2019, pp. 328-329).

In the specific field of education - where, it should be stressed, as the 20th century progressed *every child was turned into a pupil* -, incentives to reflection-action generated a model in which autonomy and self-control became the hallmarks of the self and interpersonal relations. We contend that all ethical submission mechanisms developed over the previous century have implied that subjects are permitted to make their own choices provided that they freely observe a universal model of subjectivity. For the nation-state, the term morality has long been translated as *personal will* and *self-government*. Values are presented as truly universal principles.

Modern mass schooling, which has been gradually consolidating since the second half of the eighteen hundreds, should be perceived as yet another practical manifestation of the will to govern the soul.

Effectively, our school model is intimately bound, on the one side, to programs for the political and disciplinary management of the social fabric and, on the other, to the Enlightenment project of forming citizens who devotedly profess the values of liberty and progress. Its prevailing and idealized image directly derives from the latter: we hope and wish for school to promote difference, creativity and most other useful or essential competencies associated with individual and social fulfilment.

Similarly, Nikolas Rose (1990; 1996) views the modern school as both a human and moral technology, but also as part of a continuum that includes clinical practices of psychological observation of children, prisons, factories and the army. Educational intents are therefore structurally linked to problems as different as social adjustment, punishment, productivity or war. Children became privileged targets for individualization programs carried out particularly by these experts: psychologists and pedagogues. Their disciplinary work on idiosyncrasy consolidated around countless records that were created to classify, categorize and calibrate the skills and peculiarities of the child at risk. Indeed, one of the main novelties of the 19th century, to which authorities provided a great deal of visibility, was the discovery of the *dangerous child*. Ian Hunter (1996) situates the advent of elementary school in the context of these emerging *moral topographies*. Specifically, educational technologies deployed for the mass training of children remain, in his view, mere improvisations of the broader subject of moral regulation.

4. PSYCHO-PEDAGOGY AND THE ADVENT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY SCHOOLING

At the end of the 19th century, experts in the fields of medicine, psychology and pedagogy began working together to improve this model of subjectivation. It would soon become unrivalled and hegemonic under the banners of "active school", "comprehensive education of the individual", "New School" or "self-government" schemes. Specialists and government officials would constantly assert the primacy of the individual's original and incommensurable psychic economy, in the service of democratic-liberal ideals and inextricably linked to a perception of the future as mere projection of extant institutions. In short, one needed to operate on the child's and young adult's psyche in order to transform them into who they ought or were expected to be. It was at this juncture, as auxiliary instruments intervening in the inner life of the school subject, that artistic practices and disciplines were able to enter the discourse and reality of educational systems, where they have remained ever since. They became vital both to governing conduct and projecting school ideals.

Gustave le Bon, the author of *Psychologie de l'éducation*, maintained that the fundamental psychological principle in education could be summarized in a simple formula: "the whole of education consists in the art of inserting the conscious into the unconscious" and "morality can not be seriously constituted unless it has become unconscious" (1924, pp. 216-217). Besides "know yourself", this maxim also included

"master yourself". It was necessary to find the means of rummaging through the child's unconscious as a spiritual sphere endowed with its own, autonomous life. The main thesis was that the unconscious could be developed through the *artificial formation* of reflexes derived from the repetition of certain associations.

Moreover, the child went from being conceived as a spectator-recipient to an idealized active contributor in the elaboration of transmitted contents. As a result, school had to be transformed in the name of work principles that were entirely dependent on the specific worldview of each of its small actors. From then onward, the classroom began to be envisaged as a kind of studio or laboratory where pupils would work creatively on their own initiative, without any restrictions, and always relying on the teacher-collaborator's assistance. At this point, we are compelled to describe Maria Montessori's justifications when creating an ample didactic repository to be adopted at her *Casa dei bambini,* which first opened in 1907. The teaching materials proposed by the Italian physician were conceived at the child's *scale* and were meant to, as it were, develop their *mental flesh*. A spontaneous-sensorial process would thus be triggered, giving rise – from inside the child and the adolescent's soul – to the dormant adult within. By reinforcing the signature notions of free choice and personal learning experience – the cornerstone of scientific pedagogy, according to Montessori (Böhm, 1994, pp. 163-164) -, these new technologies promised to amplify the possibilities of the child's work. The resulting image is that of a *self-education*, with hardly any adult interference.

In this environment, research that reinforced the centrality of *play* within the school apparatus gained considerable prominence. Psychologists in the early 20th century attested in unison the idea that play was not just the first but also the most important tool employed by a child in their development, declaring that what typifies childhood is play, and that play-recreation is invaluable to a child's sustenance. Freedom of action and spontaneous activity were fundamental notions. Claparède described his *Maison des Petites* (1915) – an experimental education institution created as an annex to the *Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1912) that took in children aged three through to adolescence – as a schoolhouse that allowed for the free movement of its occupants and incited learning through play. This was his adage: "we want children to desire all they do; we want them to act, not to be acted upon" (Claparède, 1953, p. 88). Pedagogues such as Fröbel first, then Karl Gross and Stanley Hall, had for decades understood the significance of the ludic phenomenon in education. Only during the first decades of the 20th century, however, was play effectively presented as the best suited resource for children's self-development. It appeared both as a means of satisfying children's needs and as preparation for situations they might encounter in the future. Reasoning, reproduction of impressions and ideas, as well as self-awareness, could be exercised through play. In the early nineteen hundreds a large variety of these socializing practices, including those directed at adolescents, was already available, as noted by Faria de Vasconcelos (1986, pp. 295-298).

This Portuguese pedagogue further argued that all work directed at personal identity was to be carried out on a kind of stage. He declared that "active simulation of the game's objects creates an artificial self" and yields "the nascent sense of liberty" at the very center of the child's life (Vasconcelos, 1986, p. 303). This takes us to the crux of modern pedagogy. "Liberty or coercion?", enquired Claparède (1922, p. 18). The question was evidently rhetorical and was used to introduce the most agreed upon subject of his generation, that of the symbiotic fusion of personal desires with internal discipline. The child's spontaneous ability and the impulses they wish to fulfil should under no circumstances be suppressed by the educator. Where traditional school saw effort, forced attention, external pressure and imposed discipline, the so-called New Education movement discovered the concept of "interest". Direction and control are the former's magic words; freedom and initiative those of the latter. As Dewey proclaimed, "It is absurd to suppose that a child gets more intellectual or mental discipline when he goes at a matter unwillingly than when he goes at it out of the fullness of his heart" (1913, pp. 1-2); "interest and discipline are connected, not opposed", as was the case in the past (1933, p. 152). The great utopia would be realized on the basis of this certainty: in the school of the future there would be an absolute identification of the fact to be learned with the action to be undertaken and the actor involved in it. Activity directed towards the self, "in the form of (…) 'self-activity', (…) has long been a name for the ultimate educational ideal" (*idem*, 1913, p. 66).

Taking the child's vital impulse as a foundation meant focusing on manual and constructive activities. Modern educators would need to make the most of the spontaneity associated with handwork as a means to stimulate the emergence of spiritual values in the child's soul. This generation of psycho-pedagogues endeavoured to show the continuity between manual activity, which signalled the precedence of practical over theoretical intelligence, and moral progress. It not only fought for manual work to be introduced in elementary and secondary education but also for the assertion of its centrality in the socialization process. Activities such as pecking, pottery, modelling, wicker, wood and ironwork, were broadly applied as bodily exercise and also as assets for the psychic and intellectual development of children. *Learning by doing* was clamoured from the rooftops. Handwork adjusted to the child's mental age would increase their ability to observe, compare and imagine, and would stimulate accuracy and rigor, the spirit of enterprise and cooperation (Vasconcelos, 1915, pp. 44-45). It would demonstrate that social adjustment derives from the intersection of testing, sensation, comparison, judgment and free invention. Who, asks Adolphe Ferrière, is unaware of "the pleasure children experience as they are devising or creating something solid?" (1965, p. 82). The Beautiful and the Good would thus spring forth from the ingenuity and perseverance of the child's creative act. Here are a few of the disciplinary advantages identified by the Swiss educator:

1. Arts and crafts build up sincerity. In practical work there is no room for lies, nothing to hide. An object is either well-made or poorly made. As a result, nothing allows the pedagogue to better determine the child's moral character than observing them working with their hands.

2. In the same vein, emulation is built on solid foundations, whether a child is comparing their work to that of others or comparing past and present fruits of their own labour to realize the progress they have made. There is no room here for boasting without reason.

3. As for those who manage to produce something good, they can enjoy a sense of security, an awareness of themselves and of their own worth which is one of the greatest levers of progress and a successful agent in life (…). Manual work eradicates false pride while glorifying legitimate and wholesome pride (Ferrière, 1965, pp. 83-84).

It was in this context, then, that school became increasingly permeated by this panacea of subjectivation by means of aesthetic experiences. The individual conduct of children could only be influenced in order to produce socially standardized behaviour if their aspirations, desires and creative abilities were respected. Dewey, once again, was the figure who had the most to say on the law of interest, advocating that it was the area where the dynamic aspects of assimilation and accommodation coalesced. One could summarize his theses regarding the fundamental goals of schooling as the following: *all education is social, in that it is a participation, a conquest, a common way of acting; the goal of education, generally, is to conduct students to profess the same ideas that prevail among adults* (Dewey, 1913; 1933). The language of purposes remains the same in Dewey: inner discipline and social normalization.

It had clearly become a matter of practicality and experience and no longer an ideological declaration of intent. Pedagogues of the New Education movement, in the early nineteen hundreds, sought to institutionalize what became known in French as *autonomie des écoliers* and *self-government* in the Anglophone tradition. These designations referred to specific schemes that aimed to insert social life in school, making it "as similar as possible to real life" (Candeias, 1994, p. 397). In Portugal, Adolfo Lima coined the term *social education* precisely in that sense. He argued that school should cease to be "a gathering in bulk" to become "a society of children" (1925, p. 283). School would be required to keep up with social progress and faithfully portray the aspirations and the kinds of institutions that the learner needed to conquer of his own accord when entering adult society. It would have to provide a lived exercise of "emancipation and liberty, convergent and conscious action" capable of turning pupils, through practice, into future participants and collaborators in a "superior, sublimated social life"; "prison-school, barrack-school, convent-school, oligarchical and chauvinistic school" would thus be succeeded by "social school" (*ibidem*). For these educators, true freedom

was, fundamentally, a matter of social conscience. "Social discipline is a product of mental and sentimental discipline", declared Adolfo Lima (*ibidem*). For these educators, true freedom was, fundamentally, a matter of social conscience: "social discipline is a product of mental and sentimental discipline", declared Adolfo Lima (1925, p. 283). As a system, self-government was meant to emancipate pupils from traditional disciplinary drudgery and the personal tutelage of adults, placing them instead under the supervision of their own moral conscience. Individual self-mastery and dependence of the social group meant exactly the same thing, and this configuration would operate through a properly political technology. It becomes clear how the internal perception of the subject's self-constitution correlates and merges with the government of the state.

Paraphrasing Roger Cousinet and James Baldwin, Ferrière noted that self-government had taken on two different meanings, one psychological and another political. The first "primarily means sovereignty over oneself, self-command, the virtue of those who can resist their passions and conduct themselves based on reasonable principles, who are able to decide against their personal interest when such an interest goes against public interest, who acknowledge their own faults when they have them" (Ferrière, 1921, p. 234). The second was tantamount to a democratic political system. It made autonomy correspond to a kind of organization wherein free citizens only obeyed laws for which they had directly or indirectly contributed. Personal virtue would dwindle in the absence of regulations. Self-command was perceived as "the essential quality that the citizens of a democratic system must possess" (Ferrière, 1965, pp. 182-183). To attain it, future citizens would need to exercise discipline of their own accord and develop the habit and the taste for truthfulness - in the absence of the teacher, where possible -, so as to internalize the idea that work should be carried out for personal development or to garner social esteem – and not simply to be evaluated by the teacher. Conversely, this system also sought to develop an *esprit de corps*. Individualization and homogenization were inextricable. More than just moral theory, this meant creating the true necessity of democracy. Civic education would no longer be a set of contents added to the curriculum, but an act connected to *habitus*. That is, an applied exercise of citizenship duties, social responsibility, voting, public debate, denunciation of favouritism and sectarianism. School would become "a kind of laboratory where education on civic life [is] carried out naturally, spontaneously"; in time, as we know, habit would become "necessity" (Ferrière, 1965, pp. 194-195).

It is therefore not surprising that these pedagogues sought to build their model schools based on contemporary political institutions. Let us take the example of the American experience, where small school republics emerged within the public school system itself. The most renowned at the time was the *George Junior Republic*, created in Freeville, in 1895, by William R. George. The system was that of a direct democracy. School aimed at reproducing life and the various public authorities. Its Constitution mentioned a Legislative Assembly, an Executive Power

and Courts. In addition, conventional currency was used, pupils earned salaries – "Nothing without labor" was its motto – and a newspaper, entitled *The citizen*, was published. Most significantly perhaps, the target group of this experience were adolescents of both sexes, between the ages of 14 and 18, who were at risk or already leading marginalized lives. A colony and boarding school that perceived itself as a miniature republic. When visiting the institution, Ferrière remarked that William R. George's project was an attempt to make the transition "from the republics of the abnormal, of the delinquents and vagrants" to "the republics of normal children" that could be found in other New School experiments (1921, p. 110). As in earlier pedagogical experimentations (Vallera, 2019, pp. 325-328, 555-632), normality had to be reached through deviation. Deviants were the first focus of frontline pedagogy. Proving its efficacy, the movement was able to expand. Further projects practiced the same principle of self-government. This model organized the educational programs of various schools in North America and Europe from the late 1920s onwards, under the sign of the New Education movement.

5. UNIVERSALIZATION OF THE AESTHETIC PRINCIPLE THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE

These pedagogical goals, governmental strategies and incitements to reform embodied in self-government models are now entirely incorporated in both the functioning and the language of the various institutions that have governed our educational systems since the late 19th century. Encompassing these previous categories, the rhetoric of *creativity* has surfaced in the recent past and has since remained at the forefront of pedagogical and scientific discourse.

By examining international policies of global agents such as The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), we can understand how notions related to the figure of the artist and artistic practice circulate in various debates on the future of labour and education, social progress and equity, and new modes of life. Both policymakers, together with European institutions, emphasize uncertainty about the future and valorise skills that address complexity and change (Eurydice, 2009; UNESCO, 2015; OECD, 2018). In order to adapt to an increasingly volatile and ambiguous world (OECD, 2018), education has to become "a self-regulating system" (Li & Auld, 2020, p. 516) wherein students' way of learning, more than simply incentivizing autonomy and self-discipline, needs to be based on creativity, flexibility and self-initiative, and stimulate a problem-solving, innovative attitude. Implementation of these principles and values was accelerated at the turn of the century in regard to higher education by the Bologna reform and expanded to compulsory schooling by adopting UNESCO's *Education 2030 Framework for Action* in 2015. Thereafter, skills previously associated with aesthetic experiences and the artistic ethos were implemented through governmental plans and programs on

all stages and kinds of formal and non-formal schooling – from basic to higher education and from compulsory to complementary courses. The pedagogic strategies developed through the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, such as self-government, social education, free play or arts and crafts - in which the primacy of unique, personal interest is embedded -, are so naturalized in today's educational discourse that they are seen as implicit, canonical truths. The pedagogic model constructed upon these values became a universal paradigm, the bedrock for the formulation of today's policies and frameworks, which appears self-evident and requires no justification. Against this background, it becomes perceptible how the creative, transformative shift was anticipated and made possible. If in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century the concern was to mould a pupil into an adult of the present, it seems that the contemporary tendency is to prepare the citizen for an unknown, uncertain, and ambivalent future. However, to meet the demands of tomorrow, the subject must wilfully adopt a determined vision of behaviour, grounded in the discourse of creativity, freedom, and autonomy. Following the implementation of the Bologna Process, the triad of knowledge, skill and general competence has defined what it means to be educated and what the learning outcomes within higher education should be (Reindal, 2013). The initiated standardization of education systems comprises the incentive for economic growth, where knowledge is understood as a commodity that, together with the descriptors pointing towards creative, reflective and critical thinking, enables future citizens to tackle societal goals.

As the concept of creativity is globalized, it is separated from notions of "art" and conflated with innovation (Harris, 2014). In this way, creative experience is tapered into an efficient enterprise of pragmatic solutions, novel applications and ceaseless productivity in service of the neo-liberal economy – the values and competencies underpinning international frameworks are characterized as transformative and universal, as well as of developmental, and thus learnable and practical. In the OECD's *Learning Framework 2030*, for instance, it is recognized that hitherto valued *epistemic knowledge* is insufficient for "future-ready students" (OECD, 2018, p. 4). As a result, besides disciplinary, procedural knowledge is also required. Procedural know-how, in contrast to expertise within specific disciplines, means understanding how to do something – the "series of steps or actions taken to accomplish a goal" (*idem*, 2018, p. 5). In other words, it is a capacity to think practically, adopting a problem-solving mindset - through what is often referred to as *design thinking* or *systems thinking*, applicable as a tool in business, education, or any other area -, where innovation is in high demand.
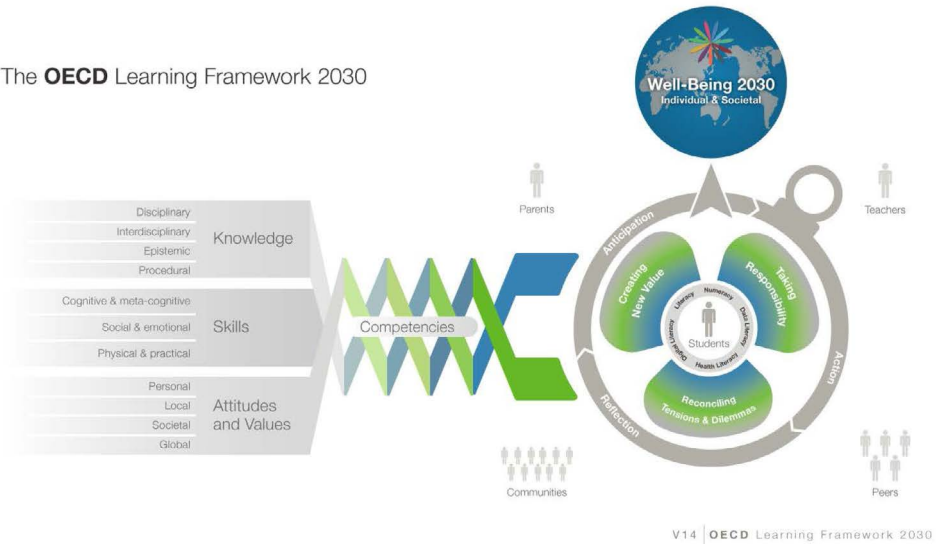
Figure 1: *The OECD Learning Framework 2030: Work-in-progress.* Source: *The Future of Education and Skills Education 2030: the future we want* (OECD, 2018, p. 4).

The skills through which innovation and self-regulation are coupled with creativity are designated under the term *transformative competencies*, "that together address the growing need for young people to be innovative, responsible and aware" (OECD, 2018, p. 5). Moreover, the language that constitutes them is wearily repetitive – the same keywords pervade the discourse on education and present themselves as unequivocally good and evident, as well as essential, urgent and indispensable to resolve problems "that have not yet been anticipated" (OECD, 2018, p. 22). The knowledge, skills and values necessary to meet the demands of the rapidly changing globalized world with "unresolved social, political, economic and environmental challenges" can be acquired through "holistic and transformational education" with a purpose of "transforming society" (UNESCO, 2015, p. 43). The ability to learn thus requires "a sequenced process of reflection, anticipation and action" translated into key constructs such as critical and creative thinking, resilience and collaboration, wherein reflective and anticipative practice is the prerequisite to taking responsibility and accepting accountability (OECD, 2018, p. 6).

In the Portuguese context, for instance, the universality of these principles is well exemplified in the *Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling* (SPECS) or *the National Plan for the Arts* (NPA), both based on EU, OECD and UNESCO benchmarks. The need to establish the NPA, as the document argues, arose in order to implement competency areas defined by the SPECS and to enhance the educational system "so that artistic education may be a tool" for the development of the desired skills (Direção-Geral da Educação, 2019, p. 23). Other national plans and programs operate under the NPA's strategic vision, expanding its area of intervention to the existing cultural and educational offer: the *National Reading Plan*; the *National Cinema Plan*; the *Aesthetic* and *Artistic Education Program*; the *School Library Network Program* and the *Portuguese Museum Network*.

The task of preparing pupils for the future is situated within the school context, "in which the students of this global generation build and

settle a humanistic-based scientific and artistic culture" (Direção-Geral da Educação, 2017, p. 6). To this end, they must acquire the values and competencies based on the principles defined by the *Students' Profile*. Besides creativity, innovation, adaptability, responsibility and lifelong learning, such constructs emphasize coherence, audacity, persistence and self-awareness, integrity (knowing how to act ethically); excellence and demand (aspiring to the achievement of a well-done work, of rigor and of overcoming); curiosity, reflection, citizenship, entrepreneurship, and freedom (*idem*, 2017). These definitions are translated into competencies that cover a wide range of areas, from language, reasoning and interpersonal relations, aesthetic and artistic sensitivity, personal development, health and well-being, to body awareness and mastery. It is implied in the description of the last two categories that students must be "self-aware at emotional, cognitive, psychosocial, aesthetic and moral level so as to keep a healthy and balanced relationship with oneself and others", especially in regard to "daily habits, food, physical exercise, sexuality and their relationship with the environment and society" (*ibidem*, p. 22, p.19).
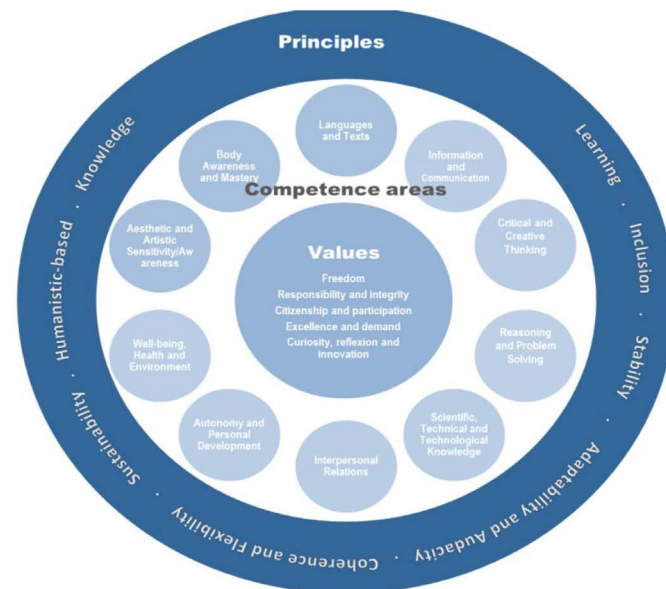

Figure 2: *Conceptual Framework for the Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling*. Source: *The Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling* (Direção-Geral da Educação, 2017, p. 7).

The NPA asserts what the pedagogues of previous generations argued – that art, especially its ludic and recreational aspects, promotes "education associated with pleasure, games and creativity" and teaches an "invaluable lesson of gratuity: that of free time, without any reason or motive", while elevating "disinterested pleasure before beauty" (Direção-Geral da Educação, 2019, p.19). In a similarly assertive manner, the document declares that "it is now a scientifically proven fact that art as a personal and cultural expression presents an essential tool for the social and human development of children and young people" and their emotional education. Art, as the authors state, is "a universal language" – capable of conveying meanings that otherwise could not be expressed. As a result, education for "citizenship, social change and collective well-being is only possible" (*ibidem*, p. 13) when mediated through an aesthetic dimension. More-

over, artistic training is mobilized within a salvationist logic, which affirms that creative expression is a form of intelligence, enabling those who feel excluded to "find their place, their element, a path to personal fulfilment and participation in the common good" (*ibidem*, p.19). Aesthetic sensibility, critical and creative thinking, are thus identified as essential to attain resilience and "greater personal autonomy", as well as to manage "uncertainty as part of life" (*ibidem*, p. 20). Creativity is described as an indispensable instrument to both adapt to and face the challenges of a globalized and technologically accelerated society. However, if creative experience produces "not only exterior, but interior transformations" and "imbalances in order to rebalance" (*ibidem*), it does so not by enhancing an individual sense of the self, but rather by promoting personal reformulation. Creativity is framed as opposing repetition and the familiar, and becomes a means to generate novel solutions and innovation – what is emphasized is the need for circumstantial self-actualization rather than personal self-cultivation. In this sense, creative self-constitution is an expedient to bolster new products, commodities and personally motivated productivity demanded by neoliberal markets.

6. CONCLUSION

In this article, we sought to compare and contrast two chronological periods and two corresponding interactions between *the artistic experience*, *the self's relation to itself* and *political rationality* within the educational field – focusing specifically on the figure of the pupil-artist –, oriented toward creating apt, self-disciplined and productive members of society. Significantly, we chose not to compare symmetrical forms of discourse – incipient vs. current psycho-pedagogy, early 20th century vs. present-day policymaking – but, instead, to identify the two domains where, in each of these intervals, the rhetoric that connects arts, ethics and governmental goals seemed to be more insistent and exuberant. As a result, we were able to capture specific continuities and displacements.

While a century ago a wide array of experts in the pedagogical field openly discussed and produced the strategic discourses, apparatuses and technologies that would inextricably connect creativity to conformity, free choice to obedience or interest to regulation, it is currently in the rather colourless and repetitive jargon of national and international policymakers that we can find some of the same principles of autonomy and self-reliance, initiative and mental discipline, paraphrased as self-evident and monotonous utterances and attached to other, more contemporary standards and ideals.

Pedagogical discourse on prospective citizenship seems to be afflicted by an in-built form of amnesia. Deeply assimilated concepts such as individuality = uniformity or liberty = constraint, while constituting the foundation of modern school apparatuses, regularly appear as antithetical in the language of reform. Whether it is i) the "active" school of the early 20th century criticizing obsolete methods while reinforcing mechanisms that were already at work in previous iterations and adjusting them

to democratic-liberal societies; or ii) the current paradigm focused on flexibility, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as opposed to the preceding model, where emancipation through schooling meant adhering to particular forms of behaviour and complying with an explicit political order – in either case, the fundamental principle of voluntary submission remains ostensibly unaltered.

A genealogy of the relation between arts and education must, therefore, take into account two overlapping developments. The self-government and spontaneous play schemes formulated in the 19th and 20th centuries were built upon an earlier model, inherited from the latter part of the seventeen hundreds, based on the imperative of containing and regenerating marginal populations. Once the main focus of pedagogical innovation, the orphan to be transformed into an "enlightened subject" (Vallera, 2019, p. 329) was eventually superseded by the more universal notion of the pupil in the process of becoming a citizen. Similarly, the now globalized archetype of the self-constituted pupil-artist is fabricated on top of these previously incorporated rationales of policing and reformation, autonomy and aspiration. But instead of generating subjects who constitute themselves in relation to the constant threat of deviance or the duality of conformity/nonconformity to specific models of behaviour and knowledge, present-day forms of subjectivation tend to reconfigure these pressures by binding the self to ethical and aspirational goals that it repeatedly falls short of achieving.

Deficient in regard to an ever-increasing demand for transformative competencies and failing to live up to both self-imposed expectations and an impenetrable future, the pupil-as-artist is bound to a highly efficient normalization apparatus that generates more and more demands while dispossessing subjects of their present experience. Creativity as conveyed by international policymakers and national governmental institutions such as SPECS or NPA represents the aforementioned need for circumstantial self-actualization rather than personal self-cultivation. At present, the goal is no longer the one expressed at the turn of the 20th century – producing a faithful advocate and devotee of contemporary democratic institutions – but that of engendering a subject whose identity can be crafted as a work of art in continuous reinvention, a self-created object of desire in service of neoliberal consumption.

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