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School, secondary education and youth: the massification of a system and the pursuit of meaning

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Abstract

This article is the result of an exercise of problematization about secondary education in today's context, considering the massification of this education level and how it is often seen by young students as an education that lacks meaning. We build on empirical research on the subject, as well as on a few important works that focus on the crisis of authority and how it extends onto the school and teachers, with the resulting generational tension. Then, we reflect on the different meanings school has been associated with due to the social, cultural and political changes that have been occurring. We consider school's massification process and students' frequent perception of a lack of meaning in school as one of the questions that can explain the tension in the school environment. With regard to the outcomes of this situation, we point that in spite of the universalization of access to education, the expansion of education offer, the increase in the schooling period, and the progressive loss of authority by teachers combined with tensioned generational issues in school, we find reasons to believe we are at the verge of building new meanings for both school and secondary education. We view this crisis situation as an activator of other, new school configurations pervaded with value for both teachers and young students.

Keywords

Secondary education – Youth – School.

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Escola, ensino médio e juventude: a massificação de um sistema e a busca de sentido

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Resumo

Este artigo resulta de um exercício de problematização acerca do ensino médio, no contexto contemporâneo, considerando sua massificação e, muitas vezes, a falta de sentido a ela atribuída pelos jovens alunos. Tomamos como referência pesquisas empíricas realizadas a respeito do tema e, também, algumas obras importantes, cujo foco é a crise da autoridade, estendida para o professor e para a escola e a consequente tensão geracional que daí decorre. Num segundo momento, buscamos refletir a respeito dos diferentes sentidos que a escola, como organização social e institucional, vem sofrendo a partir das mudanças sociais, culturais e políticas. Consideramos seu processo de massificação e a falta de sentido que os estudantes jovens, muitas vezes, apresentam como uma das questões que se pode colocar como explicativa da tensão no ambiente escolar. Como resultados, destacamos que, mesmo com a universalização do acesso ao ensino, com a ampliação da oferta compulsória, com o aumento do período de escolarização e, também, com a gradativa perda da autoridade por parte do professor e com as questões geracionais tensionadas na escola, somos levados a pensar que estamos em vias de constituir novos sentidos para a escola e para o ensino médio. Estamos tomando a situação de crise como um ativador de outras e novas configurações escolares, permeadas de valor para professores e jovens alunos.

Palavras-chave

Ensino médio – Juventude – Escola.

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Introduction

The aim of this text is to provide a particular perspective founded on the analysis of a few concepts by authors such as Dubet (1996, 1997, 2006), Dubet and Martuccelli (1998), Canário (2005, 2006), Dayrell (2007), Sposito (2000, 2009), Esteves (2005), Romero (2007), Tomazetti and Ramos (2010), Souza (2003), and Dufour (2005), who focus on questions of education, secondary education, and youth, particularly concerning their projects of changes within today's societal conditions.

To open our exposition, we can say that it was in the 1990s that Brazil began to develop an education policy for secondary education which, like that of other more developed countries, designs plans aiming at social modernization and democratization. Such developed countries are the ones with a significant level of inclusion of the various social segments into the basic education process¹. In these education plans, most of the attention goes to the process of modernization of the country. The purpose is to offer a new kind of secondary education in view of the changes in the production methods and labor management arising from scientific and technological development, which strongly affect social relations and the political and cultural spheres of society (BRASIL, 2000).

Law no. 9,394, from December 20, 1996, also designated the Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDB) [National Educational Guideline and Framework Law], sets forth the minimum curricular composition for secondary education, a combination which can also be used in parallel with vocational education or sequential undergraduate programs. Based on this Law, the terminology was changed, and the phrase *ensino médio* [secondary education] was adopted to designate the last stage of basic education, which aims to deepen the knowledge acquired in primary education and to educate

citizens for social life and the labor world by providing the basic knowledge necessary for students to enter higher education. According to this Law, the aim of basic education is to develop the student, ensuring that he/she gets the common, indispensable education to exercise citizenship, as well as to provide him/her with the means to progress in work and further studies.

According to Canário (2006), Dubet and Martuccelli (1998), the *school's mutations* that we perceive today are defined by a diversification of modalities, the forms of access, massification, hierarchization, prestige in terms of competition for jobs, and, for many, the access to higher education. Dubet and Martuccelli (1998) also allude to the dominant crisis in the public education system and the destabilization of the school organization, although both authors stress that efforts are being made by the system to expand access and manage overcrowding.

However, even though secondary education is currently expanding and it is almost universal in terms of access, there are other issues in question: for example, youths' permanence in school and a quality education. In his analysis of the school, Souza (2003) criticizes the way it is treated by public policies in which the real is taken as ideal and contexts are viewed as something inevitable, thus exercising a heavy burden on individuals, threatening their capacity to resist, leaving as their only option to adjust to what is already established.

In many ways, Souza (2003) views the school as devoid of its educative purposes, school knowledge being thus devaluated. Therefore, a reconfiguration of the school would be necessary, with the purpose of motivating the pedagogical practice of teachers in order to make students aware of their learning process. The legal changes and their consequences in the field of practice fail to maintain an educational project that is not sterile of meaning to students. The school, i.e., the space where the ability of learning to learn is possible, is not only also a place of acquisition of

¹ - Translator's note: In Brazil, *educação básica* [basic education] stands for early childhood, primary and secondary education.

information, but a place to form individuals for introduction into adult life (SOUZA, 2003).

According to Dubet (1997), one of school's roles is the educative one. To him, the aim of school education is not only to reproduce a culture; it goes beyond that role as it identifies with a wider project, i.e., as it seeks to outline and put into practice a cultural model and thus produce a certain kind of society and individuals. According to that logic, the role of education is closely linked to the idea of building a subject who is useful to the desired type of society; therefore, education is related to training labor in the various professional fields.

Therefore, thinking about another curriculum for secondary education puts these two factors into play: 1) the structural changes resulting from the so-called *revolution of knowledge*, which produces modifications in how work is organized, as well as in social relations; and 2) the increasing expansion of the public education system, which should meet quality standards in line with the demands of contemporary society.

The challenges of secondary education: the school as a place of sociocultural diversity

The new identity of secondary education as a stage of universally provided basic education imposes a change in both school culture and school practices. Given the massification and universalization of access that public policies have allowed, in combination with people's increasing access to worldwide communication networks and, therefore, the current flattening of information, the school system and secondary teachers are experiencing these cultural modifications in their daily lives. If, on the one hand, their youths perceive the impact of various sociocultural rhetorics which lead them to a change in their way of being, as well as in their way of forming themselves and establishing meanings to these experiences, on the other hand, they are also the very agents who build new signs and different ways of existing in social spaces which have equally influenced the collectivity.

According to Oliveira (2008), the school, more specifically secondary education, is no longer the only legitimate representative of a culture to be transmitted. To Abramovay and Castro (2003), such a monopoly of the production of meanings is not predominant in face of the multiple forms that youths are offered in order for them to build their perceptions of the world. Youths bring to the school their own languages and cultures, making themselves actors, active subjects in the construction of their way of being in the school space, rather than just content receivers.

In this context, the school culture and the education processes experienced in secondary education lose space to the various cultures that youths experience, such as the skateboard, hip-hop, funk and graffiti cultures, most times antagonistically divergent from school, which is shut in itself as it fails to offer opening spaces for the creativity, nomadism and the countless back and forths that have characterized youth spaces (PAIS, 2006).

In Dubet's words (1997, p. 223):

Students are not "naturally" willing to play the part of students. Put differently, to begin with, the school context is defined by students not as one of hostility, but of resistance towards the teacher. This means they will not listen or work spontaneously, they will get bored or do something else.

Given this scenario, teachers' activities differ from other education modalities, particularly the ones that were practiced in the past, as teachers are now faced with a public that is becoming progressively more complex. This seems to be one aspect of secondary education that denotes its crisis: its difficulty to have youths conform to the school culture. Such situations reinforce the idea that pervades our reflection about youth and schooling processes, i.e., secondary education is still a venue for long practices that not always meet its public's diversity of interests, so difficulties emerge in establishing relations of meaning on the part of young students.

Following the reflection of Dubet (1997), considering all the characteristics of the stage of life that youths are experiencing, the school is often an ineffective institution. On the one hand, the school evidences a whole process of mutation understood by many as a state of crisis; on the other hand, it cannot offer youths the necessary support for their full entrance into the world of work, in addition to the lack of human and material resources for actually conducting an education according to the curricular guidelines (BRASIL, 2000).

What the thoughts of authors such as Dubet (1997, 2006), Canário (2005, 2006), Dayrell (2007), Sposito (2000, 2009), Esteves (2005), Romero (2007), Tomazetti and Ramos (2010), Souza (2003) and others have in common is related with the understanding that secondary education should have a meaning in itself and be a space of coexistence between generations and between youths themselves, rather than being a mechanism of selection and competition. As a result, the young cultures proper of public secondary education would be incorporated. Although this is a consensus for many researchers of this subject, the propaedeutic nature still predominates in the teaching process.

In a study conducted by Abramovay and Castro (2003) in thirteen Brazilian state capitals about teachers' and students' perceptions of the goals of secondary education, in both the public and private systems, young participants pointed "preparing for higher education" as the main goal, with "preparation for work" coming in second. In turn, when teachers were asked about secondary education's main goals, they ranked "preparing the student for life" first, followed by the option "preparing the student for the labor market", with "preparing for higher education" as the third main option.

In another study coordinated by Tomazetti and Ramos (2010)², with youths from secondary public schools in Santa Maria, RS, Brazil, youths pointed as a question worthy of

reflection the methodology used by teachers in classroom and the attitude of teachers who do not seem willing to dialogue with them. These youths presented arguments to name their difficulties in classroom, particularly regarding the *content*, a word often mentioned by students. According to the study, the word *content* indicates that, traditionally, in the field of pedagogical methodologies, its transmission has been defined as the teacher's main duty. "Content is what the teachers passes, presents and transmits to their students".

In the study conducted by Schlickmann (2013) about the meaning that youths attribute to attending secondary education, results indicate that the institutional space denominated school plays a determinant role, as youths describe it as an important space for the full constitution and consolidation of life, i.e., an important space to be someone. None of the youths reported not to like to attend such a formal education environment. However, it is worth considering here the reasons they indicated as relevant to attend school.

Firstly, we highlight the youths' interest in certain curricular contents (or, as many put it, subjects); then, there is their interest in certain teachers; next come the learnings or potential learnings arising from their meetings with friends and schoolmates; and, finally, the perspective that, by the time they finish secondary school, they will be able to seek jobs or have a better future. In fact, answers related with the future are indicated in the answers given by the students in the study by Schlickmann (2010): "having a good future", "having a bright future", "a professional life", "having a job", "being trained to work", "having more opportunities", and "moving up in the world".

According to Dubet and Martuccelli (1998), attending school and experiencing life therein are marked by rites of inclusion and exclusion, by the arrangements and prestige the school can ensure in terms of access to higher education and work positions. The strategies students use can become more or less effective

2- Report of the study *Educação e juventude: jovens das escolas públicas de ensino médio de Santa Maria/RS*.

depending on the school's pedagogical proposal or social status. According to the authors above, as secondary students strengthen their school life strategies and utility calculations about certain courses and/or disciplines, as well as the time invested in certain tasks with a view to the social or professional utility of those disciplines, they try to establish themselves as the subjects of their school socialization in order to select the educational opportunities available to them.

The strong articulation of experiences under the prominence of the logic of social mobility for middle-class students is brutally opposed to the possibilities presented by the personal experiences and impossibility of accomplishing school projects in the case of popular class students, who are marked by school failure and often by the lack of prospects for the future. The diversity of experiences is reinforced and leads to an increasing differentiation between individuals. A youth's personal life is affected by the demands of the school he/she is subject to.

One can see that the goals previously highlighted, which are present in legal guidelines (LDB 1996 and PCN 2000), with emphasis on building students' capacity to "learn to learn" in order to enable their "flexible adaptation" to the market's changing conditions, "do not seek the possibility of critical thinking and social change, but adaptation to reality, whatever it may be (SOUZA, 2003, p. 33). What is more, our legal framework assigns to secondary education a nature that is based on the teaching of techniques and strategies of social integration, which in turn presupposes not social criticism, but acceptance of the reality the student (then a worker) will enter.

As we try to establish a more systematized outline of the situation, we can see that the school is considered good (here not in the sense of "useful") in youths' opinion when it teaches them and understands them, when it allows them to participate, to present their opinions and make plans. The school is described as attractive and important when it gives them

hope of a better life (TOMAZETTI; RAMOS, 2010; SCHLICKMANN, 2010). In view of these observations about students' expectations and the education provided by teachers, one might say that the main reason why the school has a recognized importance in the lives of successive generations of students, at least according to a much disseminated idea, can be expressed based on the excerpt below:

[...] it doesn't seem reasonable to suppose that a society that offers such unsatisfactory alternatives of life to students can be a society fully accepted by adults. Such a supposition would be equal to admitting the coexistence of two distinct worlds which do not share the same present. (FORACCHI, 1972, p. 73).

According to Carrano (2002), the same can be affirmed by recognizing that there is some limitation and/or ignorance on the part of adults, represented here by the school, who fail to take into account the social materiality and the symbolism that characterize youth's practices. Based on a significant part of the accounts and writings by students in the studies coordinated by Tomazetti and Ramos (2010) and Schlickmann (2010), we can say that youths do not feel recognized as subjects of and *with* knowledge, but as the ones who are in a limited and limiting position of being a student, being considered thus by a significant number of teachers.

In this perspective, several authors who were mentioned earlier recognize the school institution as a privileged space of possibilities, potentialities and sociabilities for youths and their access to knowledge. However, although there may be some openness, the school persists in its ignorance of the youth world and cultures, which are key factors in the process of incorporating young students into the school environment.

Based on these examples, we can think about the need for teachers to reflect about their school practices and to problematize them.

Dubet (1997) suggests for the school to recreate a normative framework in a democratic way, defining rights and duties for the whole school community. However, the adult generation that forms the school community insists in the traditional model, seeking to normatize bodies, hierarchize knowledge, make individuals homogeneous, thus losing the opportunity to establish, via school practices, relationships of interaction between generations. However, there are clear signs that the authority of teachers is being transformed by strategies imposed by students themselves.

Sustaining that the school is in a crisis³ does not mean that no effort is being made on the part of the ones who are directly involved in the educational problem in order to seek alternatives to overcome the situation. If, on the one hand, there is the idea of returning to the past, on the other, there is in many the idea of rebuilding the school based on what actually constitutes the school in the present.

The school, the authority of the word and generational denial

In their works, Hannah Arendt (1992) and Walter Benjamin (2002) have invited us since long ago to think about the crisis of authority and experience during the 20th century. It is not our goal here to rebuild in detail the perspective of these authors. However, their ideas have helped us to think about the present, with regard to what we have designated as the crisis in teachers' authority and the crisis in the school education model.

According to Dubet and Martuccelli (1998), in primary school, the experience is strongly structured by a concern with an

institutional and individual integration in which the teacher's authority and the student's desire to identify with the teacher and the group prevail. A strong correspondence then emerges between the rules of school objectivity and the subjectivity present within students. In elementary school, socialization has precedence over subjectivation, which does not emerge, but occasionally produces forms of subjectivation. In other words, students are more willing to accept what teachers propose to work on in classroom, posing little or no resistance. The desire of integration motivates students so strongly that the experience of subjectivation does not emerge painfully, save for some *deviation* in relation to the model of the group. According to the authors, this process means that, in the perspective of the relevance of roles, primary school is still an institution in the classic sense of the word, as the experience of teachers also shows.

Secondary education, however, is characterized as the reverse of primary school. In secondary school, a triple break takes place: a) students' entrance in a complex, normative world where authority is not enough to establish the legitimacy of norms; b) studies lose their natural evidence, as the meaning of study and work has no value of its own, and grades start to determine the social future; and c) finally, the school reinforces an adolescent culture ahead of, or in parallel with, the school culture.

Students build a face, which is interpreted as a postponing subjectivity that is too defensive and fragile to be asserted. Secondary students' subjectivity never expresses itself directly; it is always mediated by games of exchanges that indicate an opening to the outside world and a protection of privacy. The separation between socialization and protection is such that the school is experienced as a space of pure conflict between teachers and students. The faces of the fool (conformity with the teacher) or the clown (conformity with the group) are expressed mainly in popular schools. The logic of the face accelerates differences of a social, cultural and economic nature (DUBET; MARTUCCELLI, 1998).

3- The idea of crisis is conceived here not as ultimate defeat, but as the moment of breaking with the traditional and destabilizing patterns of the organization, a break which can be in the origin of a new conformation of what the school institution had been until recent days. The school that is in crisis is the one with clearly defined goals which are dedicated to a well-defined public, an institution whose role was to transmit knowledge and perpetuate a culture by educating the new generations. The school crisis, which could be in the origin of a new school, is therefore a hypothesis that excludes both conformism and the desire of restoration. (SOUZA, 2003)

Anchoring in authority no longer seems an element that can sustain teaching in its everyday practice. A few decades ago, teachers relied on educational models that were widely shared by their peers and were certain that their practices were founded on a social convergence of values and knowledge that should be transmitted. Therefore, the symbolic role of teachers' authority, which was basically presented through discourse, carried with it a whole imaginary world of transmission of narratives for the formation of the next generation:

Transmitting a narrative is, in fact, transmitting contents, beliefs, proper nouns, genealogies, rites, obligations, knowledge, social relations, but it is also, and above all, transmitting the gift of words. It is a way of passing the human ability to speak from one generation to another, so that the receiver of the narrative can, in turn, identify himself as himself and place the others around him, before him, and after him, from that point .(DUF0UR, 2005, p.18)

According to Benjamin (2002), the narrative, which is associated with authority, is related with the space and time of telling and living. Telling is associated with living, with the characteristics of the experience, i.e., that which was experienced, the practical sense. The narrator is the one who, in his telling, gives advice and communicates his experience. The advice is experienced in the living substance of existence, which is given the name of wisdom. Therefore, the teacher is a narrator who, in his act of narrating, narrates his own experience, which is incorporated into his practices. Thus, the experience acquires a democratic nature; it is told and heard, and then incorporated in the form of learnings.

Given the changes in the contemporary forms of narrating, there is an incommunicability of the experience between the different generations (DUF0UR, 2005). Giving advice

can no longer be a suggestion about the continuation of a story that is being narrated. Thus, in view of the new configurations of contemporary society, the experience can only be experienced and shared by the ones who participate in it.

According to Walter Benjamin (1975), the classic narrative brings practical life wisdom. However, that practical wisdom has already changed. Today, youths have perhaps more practical life wisdom as they deal with technological resources more skilfully than adults do. Therefore, a questioning may be proposed, considering Benjamin's (1975) perspective about the role of the narrative experience, in which the generational transmission was deemed something important in society for the formation of citizens. In contrast, today, that practice is being increasingly put aside, and the time devoted to it is getting smaller and smaller. On the other hand, the external symbolic references end up establishing some kind of connection of omnipotence for the new generations, i.e., the youths. However, the most decisive risk now is that some will develop of a considerable multiplicity of competences, while others will experience a growth of confusion due to the progressive loss of a minimum symbolic incumbency (DUF0UR, 2005). This modality of access was denominated by the author as sensorial or informational prostheses.

As we rely on Dufour (2005), Souza (2003), Dubet (1997) and Canário (2005) as references, it is reasonable to propose an approximation between them in which they refer to the school as a place of formation of individuals. However, in abandoning that role, the school would be assuming a solely informative role, one that is characteristic of the press and the different digital media, which are easily accessed in every social sector. Information, in turn, is founded on the principles of novelty, briefness, intelligibility and, particularly, fragmentation; its purpose is to communicate without producing a bond

between its content and the communicator, i.e., not allowing the one who informs to transmit any kind of experience. According to Benjamin (1980), the possibility of experience depends on the past and the memory; experience is, above all, a fact of tradition, and that is the trace that is absent in informational processes.

A few studies about the relationship between young students and the secondary school, such as the ones conducted by Souza (2003) and Tomazetti and Ramos (2010) indicate that students perceive a poverty of experiences in what is communicated in school; therefore, information seems to be the center of the teaching process. These studies also highlight teachers' complaints that students no longer listen to them; consequently, one might think, if they no longer listen, then they no longer speak either. From this situation arise difficulties in establishing a dialogue integrated by an organized discourse in which each individual can actively participate, rather than a situation where there is only somebody who speaks and somebody who listens (DUFOUR, 2005).

However, even in this scenario, many teachers spare no efforts and invest all of their strength to get students to assume their position as students. Indeed, one of the main difficulties facing teachers lies in presenting themselves as representatives of a world they share with that of students' experience, given the cultural diversity existing in classroom because of the massification of education in recent years. In addition, we have a young subjectivity that changes at the same pace as social transformations, thus producing new forms of being and acting in social spaces. However:

[...] because students have been prevented from being students, teachers are being increasingly prevented from exercising their craft. For thirty years now, at each so-called "democratic" reform, political decision-makers and the pedagogy experts who advise them keep telling teachers that they should quit their old pretension to teach. (DUFOUR, 2005, p. 136).

The authority of the teacher has been shaken, and what is even more serious, it has been subtracted, for example, when the former French education minister, who is a professor, stated to *Le Monde* newspaper, in November 1999, that there were no students in school anymore, but a new category, "the young", who want to "inter-react" (DUFOUR, 2005, p. 136).

If the politically correct denomination is no longer "students" but "the young", then there are no more students in the school; if there are no more students, there is no need for teachers and, consequently, there is nothing to teach and teachers, in this situation, would change their designation to "learning companions". Considering the differences between France and Brazil, what we should do is problematize the facts about the decline of teachers' authority and, consequently, of generational relations within the school. By presenting Dufour's (2005) critique of the French former minister, we are not denying the condition of being young, which is present in the student condition and, therefore, the presence of young cultures in the school, but we consider it necessary to think that such conditions do not exclude each other, but can be experienced in a relatively harmonious manner in the school context.

Final considerations

When we affirm that the figure of the teacher is in a crisis, we are taking the word *crisis* as expressing the condition of transformation and the possibility of new configurations. Therefore, we can say that the teacher's old ways no longer ensure the expected results and that trying to rely on that representation of a teacher has been an ineffective attitude; many teachers end up seeking coercion as the immediate solution as they find themselves unable to succeed in their teaching (DUBET, 1997).

It is always important to return to Hannah Arendt (1992) and think that the teacher's authority was rooted in the authority

of tradition in that teaching was based on a great respect for the past while seeking a mediation with the present, with the new. According to Arendt (1992), we live in a world that is no longer structured by authority, nor kept by tradition, since tradition is associated with conservation.

To her, the loss of authority, which began in the public and political life, is in the core of the crisis we face now, a crisis that is also present in education. Authority is directly associated with the responsibility for the course of events in the world; as it is refused by adults, it is also refused by future generations, i.e., since adults fail to assume their responsibility for the world they live in, how could they be responsible for the future generations? The loss of authority is linked with the refusal of responsibility, and is, therefore, a symptom of dissatisfaction about the world or, in Arendt's terms, a strangeness towards the world (ARENDT, 1992).

However, the generational question – or its denial – has become one of the key issues for the generations attending school today, thus unbalancing the education system. All this is based, nonetheless, on the idea that the learning for social life might dispense with any guidance from older generations. Indeed, today, the loss of connection between the older and the younger becomes visible in many occasions, as if they lived in completely opposite worlds. However, the construction of coexistence between teachers and students is often conducted through arbitrariness or authoritarianism (DUBET, 1997).

In Dufour's (2005) perspective, from the educational point of view, the break between modernity and postmodernity⁴ apparently produced a model of society where nothing is cultivated anymore, and one generation does not educate the other. So when the generational

motive for authority and, therefore, for responsibility, disappears, there is no more education, there is no more formation. Thus, the postmodern school apparatus⁵ astonishingly presents only information, curiously in a period of universalization of education, a fact that can be seen for the first time in history in the majority of countries, in which:

School institutions (including universities) find themselves in a mission of receiving uncertain populations, a mission in which the relationship with knowledge has become a very accessory, sporadic concern. With regard to education, this means holding the future unemployed for as long as possible and at the lowest possible cost. A new kind of plastic institution, whose secret is held by postmodernity, a midway between youth lodging and culture, partial hospitalization and shelter, bearing some similarity with certain types of school playgrounds, is being installed under new eyes. (DUFOUR, 2005, p. 148).

However, the universalization of access to education, the expansion of mandatory offer and the increase in the schooling period, in parallel with the increasing destabilization of teachers' authority according with the canon of school tradition, as well as the difficult relationships between generations in school, could lead us to the following consideration: what we have today in the school context is the production of an individual devoid of a critical function and susceptible to an uncertain identity. However, we find this statement a fragile one as it fails to consider the singularities of the relations that occur in school between

4- Postmodernity is defined by French philosopher Lyotard (2000) as a situation in which the great narratives (the great philosophical systems on which we base our consciousness and action) cease to have the credibility they used to have. Postmodernity became the situation of crisis and loss of legitimacy of metanarratives, i.e., the ultimate discourses that sustain fundamental discourses.

5- According to Dubet and Martuccelli (1997), the notion of apparatus emerges as the counter-model of the notion of institution at the time when school massification weakens the illusions of the republican school. When school massification and the progressive installation of the single-school system should engender an increasing equality of opportunities, inequalities were soon found to continue or not to lessen significantly, and the various relationships with study were found to remain strongly marked by the social background of the students and the system, and, in view of this, sociology must adopt a denouncing attitude.

teachers and students, the possibilities of building new meanings to the teacher role and the student role. So the issue is not the failure of the school, the failure of teachers' authority, and the failure of the student role, but the need for us to problematize our present, find its contradictions and challenges and the

new meanings and configurations which are emerging, thus reinforcing our concept of crisis as the possibility of creating new ways of life: "The school crisis, which could be in the origin of a new school, is therefore a hypothesis that excludes both conformism and the desire of restoration" (SOUZA, 2003, p. 20).

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