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School walls: thought and invention in the intertwinement among school, childhood and philosophy

Muros da Escola: pensamento e invenção na união entre
escola, infância e filosofia

Muros de la Escuela: pensamiento e invención en la unión entre
escuela, infancia y filosofía

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Abstract

This paper problematizes school and some truths that permeate the educational environment and produce ways of being and existing in the world. It introduces a study carried out by a research group who discusses some data on second graders who attend a public Elementary School in a city in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Philosophical problematizations and children's narratives were used for understanding how they see school and for finding other ways of using this space. The theoretical-methodological tools used for the analysis were Michel Foucault's concept of problematization and Narrative Inquiry. By enhancing children's ways of thinking and their inventivity, this study aimed at creating alternative possibilities within the school to enable the inventive development of relations between children and their school.

Keywords: School. Philosophy. Problematization. Michel Foucault.

Resumo

O artigo problematiza a instituição escolar e algumas verdades que atravessam a seara educacional, produzindo modos de ser e de estar no mundo. Apresenta-se um estudo realizado no interior de um grupo de pesquisa, discutindo alguns dados produzidos na pesquisa em questão, a qual foi realizada com um grupo de crianças estudantes do 2º ano do Ensino Fundamental da rede pública de educação em uma cidade do Rio Grande do Sul. Valeu-se de problematizações filosóficas e de narrativas dos infantis como forma de compreender o modo como enxergam a escola e de espreitar outras formas possíveis de pensar esse espaço. As ferramentas teórico-metodológicas utilizadas para a realização desta análise foram o conceito de problematização de Michel Foucault e a Investigação Narrativa. Potencializando os modos de pensamento e de inventividade infantis, objetivou-se a criação de possibilidades outras dentro do espaço escolar, buscando a elaboração inventiva de relações da criança com a escola.

Palavras-chave: Escola. Filosofia. Problematização. Michel Foucault.

Resumen

El artículo problematiza la institución escolar y algunas verdades que atraviesan el ámbito educativo y producen modos de ser y estar en el mundo. Presenta un estudio realizado dentro de un grupo de investigación, discutiendo algunos datos producidos en la dicha investigación, la cual fue llevada a cabo con un grupo de niños y niñas del segundo año de la educación primaria de la red pública de una ciudad del estado de Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. Se utilizaron problematizaciones filosóficas y narrativas infantiles como forma de comprender cómo perciben la escuela y vislumbrar otras formas posibles de pensar ese espacio. Las herramientas teórico-metodológicas utilizadas para este análisis fueron el concepto de problematización de Michel Foucault y la Investigación Narrativa. Potenciando las formas de pensamiento e de inventiva infantiles, se buscó la creación de otras posibilidades dentro del espacio escolar, apuntando a la elaboración inventiva de las relaciones de los niños con la escuela.

Palabras clave: Escuela. Filosofía. Problematización. Michel Foucault.

1. Introduction

Childhood, creation, inventivity. How can we devise a way to make school become an institution dedicated to children's thinking? To look at it and think of its multiple possibilities of listening to children is one of the objectives of this text. In Foucault's company (2014), we see school not only as the production of docile bodies, but also as a place of tensioning, resistance and infinite operational possibilities within it.

This study is a part of a broad investigation which ended this year (2025) and was conducted by the Research Group Education, Culture, Environment and Philosophy (GEECAF) at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande (FURG) located in Rio Grande, Rio Grande do Sul (RS), Brazil. By means of Philosophy, it aimed at problematizing and tensioning some scientific truths that lie within our society and the educational environment. To enable such movement, we had five meetings with children who attend a public city school in Rio Grande, RS. From a Foucauldian perspective, the investigation aimed at enabling movements that tension thinking and provoke our sound truths about school, Science and the world we live in. Thus, we advocate that institutions must be tensioned and, through our questioning and invitations made to children, we highlight Philosophy in the school routine and show how it may be a respite in the modern system and keep scientific bases which still constitute the school.

Regarding our meetings with the children, we decided to problematize the ones whose theme was the school. Based on the children's views, we aimed at understanding how they saw the institution under study and at finding other ways of making and creating the school that we experience every day. This text is about this philosophical exercise that provokes the school.

The text is divided into three sections. In Methodological path, we introduce the outlines of the research journey and highlight problematization as its procedural and strategic axis. In the next section, we describe studies of school and children's speech when their thinking is tensioned and they are able to create other meanings in the school environment. Finally, our final remarks tie the ideas together and point out the changes that studies of child listening may cause to researchers, teachers and professors in Basic and Higher Education.

2. Methodological path

This study aimed at tensioning the school by means of problematization and child listening. It was carried out in a school located in the outskirts of Rio Grande, RS, Brazil. The children who participated in this study are 7-8-year-old second graders.¹ Our weekly meetings lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The class is composed of 14 children, but the rate of absenteeism is high due to climate issues, mainly in winter when there is heavy rain in the region.

The starting point of this investigation was Michel Foucault's thoughts. Foucault shows us that problematization enables us to exercise thinking and that this movement may help us understand the world we live in, what we are and, as a result, devise other ways to follow. When Foucault (2006) is questioned about how he defines his intellectual work, he explains that his investigative movements aim at problematizing culturally and historically established knowledge and truths. Since he believes that the exercise of thinking may lead us to comprehend and tension power relations, he is characterized as a pyrotechnist: "[...] I wanted the words that I wrote to cross walls, make locks break apart, open windows!" (Foucault, 2006, p. 76); his work is an explosion that aims at upsetting us and set our minds in motion.

Foucauldian studies make us understand that the philosophical exercise is the exercise of thinking. The author (Foucault, 2017) showed us that it is about opening spaces to "why", "how" and "what if". It is not an easy movement because we experience relations of power-knowledge which act on the development of our ways of being and set rules that we must accept and put into action all the time. Thus, questioning knowledge and truths which were instituted as

¹ The study was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee with human beings at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande (FURG) and approved by it. The investigation project outlines the objectives, target public and the methodology, the Informed Consent Form, the Free and Informed Consent Form and the authorization given by the school to conduct the study. The Project was approved on March 13th, 2024 (no. CAAE 75271923.0.0000.5324).

unquestionable becomes hard, since this movement makes us question what is found in our subjectivities and, therefore, produces us.

What we wanted to do was “[...] a kind of disruption in our thinking” (Silva, 2019, p. 40). The modern episteme instituted discourses that promise a free life, an autonomous and emancipatory life, provided that it is woven by the sieve of reason. Our relations with ourselves and with the others are interpellated by the truths and produce the ways of being a subject these days. “Much more interesting and productive is to ask and examine how things work and happen and then rehearse alternatives to make them work and happen in other ways” (Veiga-Neto, 2016, p. 19). As a result, firstly, we wanted to understand how problematization of the school could make us see it in different ways.

Foucault was heavily influenced by Nietzsche’s studies; when he tried to understand how we become what we are, in his books, courses and classes, he aimed at analyzing how historical events, truths and games of established power-knowledge may produce us as subjects to constitute our subjectivities. Thus, throughout his life, he developed several conceptual tools that may help us to reflect on the field of Education:

[...] And which are the conceptual tools that Foucault places in our hands to carry out this task? As good examples, we may cite the intricate relations between power and knowledge, processes of subjectivation – understood as mechanisms through which we become subjects and, at the same time, subject to others and to ourselves-, both archaeological and genealogical methods, ethics – as selfcare – madness, governmentality, discourse, etc. (Veiga-Neto, 2006, p. 3).

Our intellectual intercessor did not establish any fixed method since his way of looking at history neither follows a structure nor aims at constructing linearity. On the contrary, he believes that knowledge is constructed in intersections, “[...] what moves us is, deep inside, a permanent suspicion [...]” (Veiga-Neto, 2016, p. 21-22). When we loosen the concept of method, we may understand it as “the path that takes us somewhere” (Veiga-Neto, 2009, p. 84). The Foucauldian perspective has broad concepts that may help us to look at the world. The author operates different tools that put his studies in motion. Therefore, in Foucault’s workshop, we chose the concept-tool problematization which may lead us to understand the history of a certain object of analysis, tension its currentness and even provoke the development of other operational possibilities.

Thus, by making use of Foucault’s toolbox (Veiga-Neto, 2006), we wish to walk towards suspicion and make both restlessness and questioning walk together to problematize truths that permeate and constitute our actions. As a result, one of our choices was to conduct a historical analysis of the school to understand the reasons why it became one of the most important institutions in contemporary society.

Foucault (2006) believes that the exercise of thinking is fundamental to understand the truths that subjectivize us and invites us to criticize, “making too easy gestures become difficult” (Foucault, 2006, p. 5). Foucault teaches us that it is about finding problems, rather than looking for answers, because we can do the exercise in the movement that tries to answer them, “we must think in a problematic way, more than questioning and answering dialectically” (Revel, 2004, p. 83). To think in a problematic way is to establish discontinuity of thought. It is in this exercise which the philosopher uses in his studies – going through different domains – that he problematizes historical constructions, established power games and ways in which subjectivities were produced.

Together with the concept of problematization, this study also uses Narrative Inquiry as a methodological tool. In this movement, children’s speech was recorded and transcribed by the researchers. We believe that, when children narrate their experiences, ways of thinking and questioning, we enable them to be listened, share experiences with classmates, researchers and their own thinking since “to narrate is something that implies some sense of what we are and how we constitute ourselves through discourses that circulate in the educational spaces where we pass through” (Caseira, 2022, p. 92). Based on the belief that we produce ourselves with our narratives, the movement of problematization, together with Narrative Inquiry, aimed at disturbing not only children’s thinking, but also ours.

3. Problematizing school and children's thinking

The conception of current discourses in school is that it is everybody's right and that everybody must be confined within its walls. Even though we agree that it is important and advocate that it improves people's lives, we know that its discourses also capture and govern bodies (Henning and Ferraro, 2022). We want to analyze and understand what makes this institution so important these days, rather than meaning that it is either good or bad. Aligned with these ways of thinking, the school uses strategies to capture subjects earlier and earlier. Silva and Henning (2019) carried out a study of policies on Childhood Education and showed that, based on legal discourses, children must start attending school when they are 4 years old. It seems that the intention to discipline and turn children into students has been increasingly pulsing and strengthened. Practices developed in the institution should be highlighted: on one hand, researchers and activists who fight for Childhood Education and policies aim at ensuring quality public assistance since the first step of Basic Education; on the other hand, we must pay attention to the ways in which such assistance has happened and to the effects they cause on children.

Children were seen as incomplete and weak subjects who needed to be turned into adults for a long time. Multiple pedagogical discourses kept reinforcing this idea throughout the centuries and added that children should be treated as work in progress to become adults (Ariès, 1981). In the advent of Modernity, "from the mere biological condition, children emerge and are considered and explained as beings who are different from adults, as innocent and poor beings who need care and protection" (Resende, 2015, p. 268). In her book, *A história da infância sem fim*, Sandra Corazza (2004) shows us that sociocultural transformations lead to a new perception of childhood. Children become subjects that need to be cared for, protected and tutored for the sake of their safety and, to reach this goal, schooling processes were also developed. Therefore, sometime after the invention of childhood which makes children get the space of subject-object, Education becomes mandatory, a fact that results in "[...] production of modern child subjectivity" (Resende, 2015, p. 267), thus, defining and characterizing the educational field. In sum, children must be educated, they must be guided; to make the mechanism work, children must be schooled (Resende, 2015).

Other discourses have been produced nowadays. Children have been considered subjects of their own learning, subjects who have knowledge. However, we should keep in mind that, according to discourses that have circulated in the society since the invention of childhood, it must be administered by adults (Ariès, 1981). As a result, in school, another form of child subject was adopted, discourses changed, childhood has been valued even by means of disciplinary practices that aim at developing docile bodies.

Thus, discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity' which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. If economic exploitation separates the force and the product of labour, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination (Foucault, 2014, p. 135-136) [author's emphasis].

Based on this way of understanding discipline, we may see how this mechanism is found in school. When children become students, discipline becomes imperative: several strategies are triggered to make them learn how to sit in class, keep silent, carry out all activities and respect schedules, all in due time. The modern model of schooling is composed of disciplinary techniques which use existing norms to establish parameters and develop their strategies. It is noticeable that the mechanisms of control aim at producing child behavior. According to Resende (2015), school got stronger and became fundamental: "[...] school obligation was gradually being imposed in several parts in the western world, turning school into an obligation that spread in individual and social levels. The child population should be 'mandatorily' schooled" (Resende, 2015, p. 269) [author's emphasis].

Henning and Ferraro (2022) propose problematization of school obligation since they believe that it is an action of governmentality. They make us think about fissures in the relation School-State. They point out some of Nietzsche's criticism of mass schooling and show that this process acts as a governmental strategy which leaves no space for creation and experimentation. Based on this idea, schooling serves as a mechanism to govern the population since it uses multiple technologies to come into operation. In these institutions, time and space are thoroughly planned and goals are very concrete: to make all school structure contribute to production, to body subjectivation, so that all subjects constitute a collective mass and fight again for unique, equal and familiar thinking.

Based on Foucault and other advocates of this thinking, we aim at problematizing school to tension existing truths and at finding other ways in the educational scenario. Because school Education has become an unquestionable truth, it warrants our strangeness.

[...] School is a space of epistemological production which acts on the order of knowledge, on the organization of a curriculum based on age, on minimum contents, generated by conflicts, always tense ones, in power games; therefore, a space of truth production. School is also a space to face the development of behavior, which is always generated by means of tension with the subjects that inhabit it; after all, they are power relations that involve the individuals' political fight. This standoff leads to the daily and gradual production of a certain subject meddling in established relations, standoffs and shaping of a specific type of subject according to the historical moment (Teixeira; Henning; Vieira, 2021, p. 5).

School is usually considered the space of knowledge production. Children learn, from an early age, that knowledge is produced in school and that "in school, we get intelligent [...]" (Child 4)². Such discourses reverberate and are reproduced by the society. However, based on our studies and on intercessors that help us analyze this environment, we advocate that the school goes beyond knowledge production; by means of power games, it produces ways of being and develops students' subjectivities. According to Foucauldian studies, when the idea of power is discussed, it refers to strategies of power that gradually penetrate the subjects, shape them and subjectivize them, rather than referring to a great force, an exclusively vertical force. Sílvio Gallo and Rafael Limongelli (2020, p. 12) highlight that "[...] a child, even though she is herself/himself among her/his equals, does not deviate from the goal: to become adult and, to make sure it happens, s/he needs to be protected and governed". Therefore, school time and space must be organized to ensure it.

The organization of a serial space was one of the great technical mutations of elementary education. It made it possible to supersede the traditional system (a pupil working for a few minutes with the master, while the rest of the heterogeneous group remained idle and unattended). By assigning individual places it made possible the supervision of each individual and the simultaneous work of all. It organized a new economy of the time of apprenticeship. It made the educational space function like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding (Foucault, 2014, p. 144).

The organization of school spaces, lines, seating arrangements, teachers' behavior and the watchful eye in the institution operate to keep constant vigilance and avoid fissures and possible escapes to normalization. The conversation between the researchers and the children demarcates their perceptions of this disciplinary space. When we had a storytelling session and read "The Color Monster" (Llenas, 2021), the children tensioned our meeting with many questions about the school. The main character of the story must attend his first class in school but he is afraid because he does not know what it is. With a friend's help, he discovers what school is and what is done there. Throughout the day, the little monster ventured into and experienced the new space. When the children were questioned by the researchers, they made comments about the monster's school and theirs, pointing out the seating arrangement:

² Children are introduced as numbers to keep them anonymous.

Researchers: Is there something in the Monster's school that you also have in yours?

Child 1: It has a backyard... it has a playground... it's not like the one in the story, but there is one here, sometimes we don't go there because it is wet... It has a classroom, but the little tables are different, it is a bit of table and a bunch of chairs and here it is a bunch of tables and one chair.

Researchers: And how would you like your classroom to be?

Child 2: Like this, we like to sit together to do things.

Researchers: The way you are now? (referring to the seating arrangement proposed for the activity)

Child 1: Yes, we like to be all together.

Firstly, the children found it strange to be invited to sit on the floor, in a circle, but, even so, they showed enthusiasm. School discipline teaches children, from an early age, that you cannot sit on the floor, but *sit straight on the chair*, that you must look straight ahead, that there is specific time to go to the restroom, to drink water and other impositions. To sit together to carry out a task is, for them, a very different, rare moment which they enjoy a lot. We know that the school requires teachers to comply with the rules, to maintain *order* in their classrooms, but it is worth asking: what is the *order* for? Are there other ways of intertwinement, possibilities of inhabiting the classroom which differ from mere *obedience*? Which landscapes, inventions may happen in the classroom?

According to Gallo (2015, p. 14),

[...] the school as a disciplinary institution is the 'school of knowledge'. In this school, everything revolves around the curriculum and programs; the former is nothing but a set of knowledge. Students do not learn how to live; they learn how to know, to look for the truth, to show it. And, at the same time, they are disciplined; their bodies and spirits become docile and obedient; they undergo a process of subjection which implies the constitution of their docile subjectivities, just like their bodies. Thus, an alternative to improve school is to make it life-oriented, rather than knowledge-oriented. A school which is a place to learn how to live, a place to exercise self-restlessness, to experience selfcare, to know oneself to be and live well, to produce oneself as a unique subject.

Based on the understanding of what school is and how it acts on school subjects, we ask ourselves: may we do it differently? May we think differently? According to Foucault (2006, p. 3), "[...] there is always a little thought even in the most stupid institutions, there is always thought even in silent habits". Thus, we believe it as a form of hope that says we may create fissures that instigate children's thinking, that it is viable to do Philosophy in schools as a way of activating thinking. We believe that there may be moments of escape, experiences that provoke thinking and potentialize school to go beyond the goal it was built on.

Childhood is multiple and full of possibilities and school may be the place children go through and experience different affection, meetings, possibilities of inventing, thinking, creating. We see it as the *Aión* time³: "[...] time of Education as a long-lasting, intensive experience that extends present temporality: the event that interrupts the chronological sequence and enables an in-person experience that occurs in the present" (Kohan, 2020, p. 7).

After the previous discussions that we had with the children, we invited them to walk around the school. Eight children, arranged in pairs, participated that day. Every pair got a cellular phone to record the places they found the most interesting ones in their institution. During the walk, we instigated their thinking by asking trigger questions so that they could not only choose places to record, but also question them: "If we could have another type of school, how would it be?" (researchers); "And what else could we have here?" (researchers). In these moments, while walking and looking attentively, choices and records were providing conditions to make children analyze the school they inhabit.

The children were very excited because they were walking around the school during *class time* but, at the same time, there was some strangeness. Since they were used to school discipline and rules of conduct, they made a line when we started the activity because they are only allowed to leave the classroom without standing in line when they

³ According to Walter Kohan (2020), in the school, we have *Khrónos* time, which is the chronological one, the time of discipline, the fragmented one, but we may have *Aión* time, the one of possibilities, creation, inventivity, thinking.

go to recess. We asked them to walk in pairs to share the cellular phone, but we emphasized that they needed neither to stand in line nor to walk together. Thus, the children left to record their choices and called us to show them. When we analyzed the photos, we found a common place shared by the four pairs: the playground.

Image 1 – Photographic record



Source: Children 4 and 7 (2024).

Image 2 – Photographic record



Source: Children 5 and 6 (2024).

Image 3 – Photographic record



Source: Children 1 and 8 (2024).

Image 4 – Photographic record



Source: Children 2 and 3 (2024).

When children start attending Elementary School, the discourse on childhood is intertwined with the concern for writing development, literacy, Mathematics literacy and much knowledge considered *necessary*. Playing is often restricted to Early Childhood Education and to recess. Léa Tiriba (2018) makes us reflect on school walling and states that most institutions are designed so as not to enable the learning space to be broadened. In official documents, such as the National Common Curriculum Base (Brasil, 2028), there are guidelines related to the importance and need for other learning environments. However, the fear of indiscipline prevents these places from being used. When one of the children showed us the photographic record, we asked:

Researchers: If you were going to do what the Fairy⁴ did, what would you put here?

Child 5: More rides, it would be nice to have a roundabout and more time to play.

Researchers: More time?

Child 5: It would be nice just for our class.

Researchers: Why just your class? Don't you think it is fun with the other kids?

Child 5: Yes, but we have to wait to use them.

Researchers: And has your class already come alone?

Child 5: With the other teacher, yes, and now.

Educational legislation and norms legitimate the discourse established in the school culture, i. e., teachers must *teach* the content; as a result, time cannot be wasted. This assumption does not consider that 8-year-old children often want time to play, that free play which enables imagination to be used during the so-called class time. We know that it is not about teachers' wish, since institutions have rules and well-established discourses on learning.

In the photographic records, it was not only the playground that interested the children. Children 4 and 7 showed us a very interesting record. They took a photo of a place which could be called garden and, according to them, "it would be nice if it were more colorful and had animals" (Child 4):

Image 5 – Photographic record



Source: Children 4 and 7 (2024).

⁴ It refers to the story *A Fada que tinha ideias* (Almeida, 2007) which was read to the children in the first meeting. The story is about a fairy who had unusual ideas which others had never thought about before. They made her experience different challenges and perspectives.

Then, we started a conversation about this place and ideas they had:

Child 4: I wanted it to have some orange flowers!
Researchers: Why orange?
Child 4: It is my favorite color.
Researchers: And what else should there be here? What do you like the most in this place?
Child 4: Ah! I like everything. It would be nice if we could do things.
Researchers: Can't you? Aren't you the ones who plant and take care of this place?
Child 7: No, it is Ms. XXXX.
Child 4: But it would be nice if we planted several things.
Child 7: Imagine a giant tree full of little birds!
Researchers: Would it be nice?
Child 7: Very much! We could make some little houses where they could eat, just like in my home.
Child 4: Yes!!! They would live here and we would take care of them.

School spaces are not only part of the school architecture, but also part of the development of students' subjectivity. Both space and time are constituted of discourses that produce school behavior; they act as pedagogical mechanisms that surround and subjectivize the subjects that attend school. "[...] school architecture may be seen as an educational program, as an element of the curriculum, which is invisible and silent, even though it is very explicit or unconcealed itself" (Escolano, 1998, p. 45). Despite discourses that value students' participation in the construction of these spaces and time, what we find are well-defined adult-centered designs, a fact that makes it increasingly harder to the target subjects to feel that they belong to it.

The school machine operates several disciplinary mechanisms whose effect is the conformation of childhood. The pedagogical organization makes time and space articulate in a meticulously calculated way, a fact that enables to control activities and compose the modern school device intertwined with scientific-disciplinary mechanisms (Resende, 2015, p. 271).

To ensure discipline and order, few moments are given to the subjects – to whom schools were designed – to talk and express their likes, wishes in a space where their thinking is respected. When we pay attention to children's speech, we perceive that children would like to have more contact with plants, that they have other ideas for that space, but they are not listened to. We wonder if, sometime, somebody talked to them about plants, trees, the arrangement of elements in that space, the way they wanted it to be. Child 7 mentioned the possibility of installing birdhouses. What if the children build them? What if every group makes a little birdhouse? What if a survey is conducted with other groups? If the school aims at these subjects, why do adults organize and define what the best design is?

Léa Tiriba (2018) makes us reflect on the relation between children and nature. She problematizes children's declining contact with the natural space, how school and classroom walls arrest those subjects and help to construct the conception of human-nature relation based on the use of its resources. The author makes us reflect on another relation to show children that there are similarities among human beings and the other components of what we call nature. Therefore, from the adult-centered perspective of school space and time, order and discipline are the bases to reach effective results of teaching and guide behavior because "[...] subjects are produced in the foldings of power relations and subjected to them; but it is this subjection that enables work on oneself, a process of subjectivation [...]" (Gallo; Limongelli, 2020, p. 10). Thus, they gradually learn how to behave in every space and, as a result, subjectivize themselves.

An illustration of this project of subjectivation and disciplinary process in the light of school rules is the following event: a child explained the reason why s/he took some photos by saying: "It is here [in the playground] where we stay during recess and we can play what we want to" (Child 3). Another child added: "Our teacher takes care of us, but, during recess, we can run, play tag" (Child 1). School subjects assimilate and learn the rules, and even know when they can play, run, do what they *want to do*. In the school, time and space are well-determined. However, we may see

some resistance to so much order and discipline: sometimes, children walk around the classroom, ask to go to the restroom, talk to a classmate... and the movement towards obedience insists again and watchwords are used to keep expected behavior.

Even though we know about disciplinary procedures and pedagogical objectives related to development of behavior, we wanted to create at least minimum spaces and time to enable thinking and inventivity in daily school life. Meetings that trigger restlessness towards school truths are powerful to tension ways of opening fissures, make openings to enable a different school since

[...] even between the walls of this institution that considers itself a place of learning and makes us be docile, useful, obedient and flexible, sometimes we may be able to resist and invent alternative spaces that potentialize in us and – who knows? – in others a questioning look at our ways of being (Ayres; Henning, 2024, p. 15).

4. Possible ways

To reflect on school and tension it was one of the objectives of this text. We used Philosophy to compose this writing. What is the purpose of school? Which purposes and ways of constituting child subjects are produced in the school? Which movements may happen when we open paths to listen to children talking about their experiences with this space? We carried out this study because we felt provoked by how the school is and by the power of inventivity in childhood.

Based on Philosophy as a way of questioning and searching for other possibilities of observing and understanding the world around us, we problematized the school by reflecting on its spaces and functionality. Theoretically, we used studies carried out by Michel Foucault and other educational authors who advocate this thinking. We used childhood to find other possibilities of understanding this space and Philosophy to provoke questions that potentialize inventivity in children and their everyday experiences so that, somehow, they can feel that they belong to that place.

In sum, it was in the intertwinement among childhood, school and Philosophy that we found other possibilities in this space to develop relation between children and the school. This study was produced with the use of the Foucauldian problematization and childhood as a movement of development of reflection on the place that houses it every day. We wish that all experiences of reflection which may be triggered by this text help to compose different ways of inhabiting the school and living with it to generate other possibilities of schooling processes that are carried out by teachers together with children.

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