

AUDIOVISUAL COMPOSITIONS AND CURRICULUM STUDIES: LINES OF FREEDOM

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ABSTRACT

This paper brings together some of the themes we have been working with in our research projects. They have in common the analysis of school curriculum practices that are theoretically related to concepts presented in the French philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. While describing different art exhibits carried out in the specific context of kindergarten and of pre-service teacher education undergraduate course, within a qualitative approach, we have established a discussion on curriculum fragmentation and on the movement and flows that go beyond the (non) representation of images and sounds in curricular productions and their artifacts. According to this plane of composition, our argumentation will be constructed through the establishment of relationships between the curriculum and the concept of freedom.

KEYWORDS: curriculum studies; audiovisual; philosophy of difference.

COMPOSIÇÕES AUDIOVISUAIS E ESTUDOS DE CURRÍCULO: LINHAS DE LIBERDADE**RESUMO**

Este artigo aborda alguns dos temas que têm sido desenvolvidos em nossos projetos de pesquisa. Eles têm em comum a análise das práticas de currículo escolar que estão teoricamente relacionadas aos conceitos apresentadas na filosofia francesa de Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari. Enquanto se descrevem diferentes artefatos artísticos executados no contexto de educação infantil e em curso de formação inicial de professores, dentro de uma metodologia qualitativa, é estabelecida uma discussão sobre a fragmentação do currículo e de movimentos e fluxos que vão além da não-representação das imagens e sons nas produções curriculares e seus artefatos. De acordo com o conceito de plano de composição, nosso argumento será construído a partir do estabelecimento de relações entre o currículo e o conceito de liberdade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: estudos de currículo; audiovisual; filosofia da diferença.

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AN INTRODUCTION: PURPOSES, CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This paper is based on material developed by research group Olho- Laboratory of Audiovisual Studies, in the Faculty of Education of the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), in Campinas/São Paulo, Brazil. In our research projects we have established a plan for curriculum that traverses Deleuzian concepts, such as the *becoming* and the *event*. These concepts are presented in Gilles Deleuze's writings and also in the production of other contemporary authors (for example, Semetsky, Buchanan and Wallin). We have highlighted images and sounds as a significant set of intercessors, seeking their potentialities, variations and singularities according to the fields of film production and visual aesthetics.

About the Deleuzian concepts we work with in this paper, Jason Wallin (2010) refers to them as a struggle against of the 'tyranny of overdetermination' – those rigid, predetermined and striated lines of thought that leave the state of things completely intact.

During the years of development of these projects, we have chosen school images in order to broaden the thought of *difference* in the intensive dialogue with Gilles Deleuze. Three research territories have been constituted since then: the work with visual and sound installations in public schools in the city of Campinas/SP – tensioning connections between identities, cultures and the invention of 'the new'; audiovisual compositions of students in the discipline 'School and Culture' of the undergraduate courses at Unicamp; and the analysis of Brazilian and foreign contemporary filmography.

In these productions, in order to keep the 'school and culture' words, images and sounds in intensive *becomings*, the proposed creations and inventions were challenged not to lead to previously identification or representation: the sounds, words and images should not refer to something previously given or written in the repertoire of visual.

As this impossibility was installed, we have considered that the 'curriculum' derives from audiovisual productions (image and visual artifacts), which are the inventive substrate of the projects that enhance the relationship between education and artistic and philosophical aesthetics. We found in Lorimer (2013) idea of 'micropolitics of disconcertation expressed in experimental image-making operates in different registers to sentimentality' (p. 75) and Hickey-Moody (2013) argument of 'a political agenda which acknowledges that the crucial agency of human feeling is choreographed by the aesthetics of existence' (p. 94) a few resonances for our own work.

About modes of inquiry

Our intention has been to evoke sensations, bringing nonrepresentational aesthetics and discursive displacement to research, associating images and

words to the universe of language. The Deleuzian concept of *becoming*² was placed in evidence, such as openness to the concept of *event*³, as we engaged into audio-visual productions in a public school for early childhood education and in a teacher education undergraduate course.

The focus of the study on images, in post-structuralist theory, is the gaps, the empty spaces that can be open to *becomings*, thus allowing differentiating ways to look and think. The photographs potentiate a surface effect: the (de)formation of several different thoughts, which scape the traces of identity, subjectivity and culture that strongly move thinking in the field of Education.

This paper deals with the experiences in those two different education dimensions: school and university. As suggested by Jan Jagodzinski and Jason Wallin (2013), art as ‘research’ isn’t strictly an epistemological affair; rather it becomes an ontological one with modification. Intelligibility (knowledge) and intuition are not dismissed, only limited as to their potentiality.

Axiology supplants both epistemology and ontology in the way the limitation of revealed truth must, nevertheless, call on action that has no precedence, raising the specter of issues of judgment and ‘taste.’ Taste is now elevated from the simple sense of pleasure in the mouth, as in a vulgar sense of aesthetics, to aisthesis, body|mind together as the general perception of the senses that constitute both the tactile and visual. Perception is extended to the intellect as well as the sense where discernment becomes an ethical matter. The dichotomous pair beauty|ugly take on ethico-political concerns, not as a ‘logic of sensation’ that refers to the subjective feelings of individuals (the art of expression and so on) but always to the ‘preindividual,’ the larval subject. (p. 34 e 35)

LINE ONE: IMAGES AND SOUNDS AND FRAGMENTS

We were welcomed to that school, new and located in a neighborhood on the outskirts of the city of Campinas. The first visit to the school intrigued everyone: its good facilities, its beauty and its location. There the streets had no pavement; still the school floor was always clean, with no dirt, and free of dust. How could an early childhood education school have such a white floor being surrounded by dirt streets?

At first, the idea of the group of researchers associated with the project was to ‘bring the dirt into the school’ in a different way, through images from the

² The *becoming* is between two multiplicities where one does not become the other, argues Semetsky (2006). It is like a line that passes between two distinct points, which is not composed by them. Like spotlights that intersect. There would be only the deterritorialization. Subjectivity is a process of becoming, it is not an identity. It is like the multiplicities of the outside and the inside, where one is not the rejection of the other, but exists in a relationship, in a dynamic process. The inside is the fold of the outside.

³ Changes immanent to a confluence of parts or elements, subsisting as pure virtualities (that is, real inherent possibilities) and distinguishing themselves only in the course of their actualization in some body or state. (Stagoll, 2005, p. 89)

outside of the school. We articulated this idea with a series of videos produced in the school and photographic images of daily school activities.

As we browsed through the photographic images of the school in different albums the circle came to our eyes. Many of photographic images had the circle in various types of activities: in games, nap time, in the vegetable garden, at the time to pay attention, watching cartoons, in teachers' meetings, at a birthday party, in the shape of the hat, the cake, even in the physical space of the school where there is a circle on the wall of the main hall. The circle, the idea of the round, the circularity, considered so educational timeline. Those images processually activate isolated and repressed singularities that are just turning in circles.

Our challenge was to work with those images, as suggested by Daniel Smith (2013), did not at all alter the *form* of the true derived from the schools experiences. The only thing that can call into question the *form* of the true (which is universal, eternal and necessary, in all times and in all places) is the *form* of time.

The images and the recording in films led to the first exhibition in the school: the material was edited, mixed and presented in a projection that occupied the entire central area of the school, an area with high white walls, with no kind of markings. At that time, it was possible to bring the out-of-the-school, the district, to the inside: the images contained the red earth, the blue of the sky and some of the characteristics of the houses of the neighborhood. It was just the beginning.

In this exhibition, the fold of the outside to the inside of the school gained intensity, we were intrigued by the folds of the school on itself, its opening to the outside, and its differential return in becomings. Later, one of the rooms in the school – one intended for children's games –had its walls covered with papers and repeated copies of the photographs produced before, and it resulted in a kind of a cover, a double fold of the school within it. All the toys from this room were removed and saved so that we could use the space.

The installation was meant to stay up for a little over than a week, so that it would be removed the same day of the next teacher meeting. During this period, the children entered the room every day and made their own interventions in installation, coloring and painting pictures. That room had become different: it was empty because it had no objects that the children were used to play with, but, at the same time, it was full. It was full of pictures of the school itself. It was also full of pictures of children, babies, teachers and activities on the walls and on the floor. The space provided both a feeling of emptiness and total completeness. There were becomings instilled by sensations of wandering and inhabiting these images.

Becoming-sensations need the ephemeral, the permanence of the event in the fragment of school pictures in folds over themselves. After a week of physical existence, it was decided that that room covered by images would be 'peeled off'.

This stripping⁴ would not simply mean to quickly remove what has been done so that the space could return to what it was. And this is significant to the work: it was the beginning of the idea of the fragmentation of everything that had been done in that space. While the teachers peeled the school images from the walls, we imagined the final exposure of that work, in which the stripping would be present so that the students would use those same papers once again, ensuring the circularity in difference of its use and function.

In order to share activities that conveyed concepts of Deleuze such as becoming, fragmentation, event, with that community parents, teachers, children and staff one more time, we gathered in school to think about the earlier exhibition of the project. Over the previous month, the children and mothers, parents or guardians were encouraged to bring objects of their own children to school, which were not being used⁵. The idea was to modify them and give them a different meaning, distinct from their previous use. Teachers, monitors and the educational coordinator wrote singular, inventive and fictional stories from those objects without use, creating differences in them, imagining other uses. On the day of the exposition, magnified photographs of the objects with their respective histories were hanging in another classroom, as a mobile whose height opened to readings of children and adults.



IMAGE 1 – Covered classroom or waiting for the *event*

⁴ Inspired by Lia Menna Barreto – Skin of a Doll: <http://lia-mennabarreto.blogspot.com.br/2009/03/exposicao-pele-de-boneca-atelier.html>.

⁵ There is a possible connection here to think of the school curriculum according to the image that Manoel de Barros brings in his poem “Ruína” (Ruin): “something that would serve to HOUSE THE ABANDONMENT, just like poor homes do. The abandonment may also be from an expression that has been brought to the archaic or even from a word. A word without anyone inside it.”

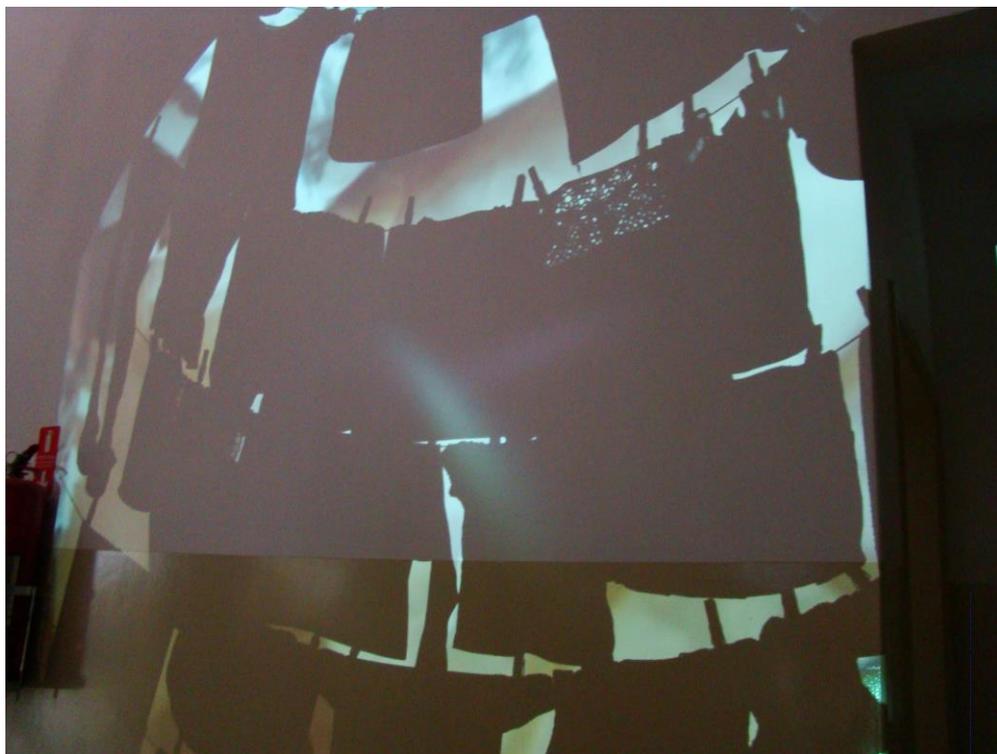


IMAGE 2 – Lines of flight of *becoming*



IMAGE 3 – In-betweening images or *fabulation*



IMAGE 4 – (Re)Drawing the draft of *reality*



IMAGE 5 – Rewriting abandon objects, producing *sensations*

Keeping with the idea of working with the abandoned objects, a clothesline was installed in front of the circle on the wall of the central area of the school, where we hung the clothes not being used. The images of the room installation were projected on the clothes and it potentialized the fragmentation of the images.

Those who walked the hallway behind the circle could see part of the projection from between the hanging clothes.

The radicality of intermittently narrating, in gaps, in the proliferation of the fragments was created in these installations. “It could therefore just as appropriately be translated as arrangement, in the sense of a ‘working arrangement’, provided it was kept clear that it described an ongoing process rather than a static situation” (Buchanan, 2015, p 383).

We also worked with school sounds, mixing them with images, suggesting a few of disruptive narratives. It is not possible to say that the musical result was something without rhythm or cohesion, but was a mutant result, a result in which the sounds appeared, formed its territory and soon were destroyed by other wires of interpretation and new resonances; and other codes were created without even the young players realizing it. Sometimes the change was so sudden that even they thought that they were ringing the musical phrase initially proposed, they already played another code, other music, feeling the effects of this change.

The habits and practices are born sound codes, almost resonance systems between sounds, among people and among people and sounds. Is thereby creating distinct sounds of domains, domains that we can even call territories. Places in the area that are characterized by certain forces of attraction distinct from each other. Moreover, if a place is created by a habit, for a game of back and forth, for a frequency - what Deleuze and Guattari call code: every medium is encoded by setting up a code by periodic repetition - is worth noting that this definition is the same definition of a sound: periodic repetition (regular or irregular) cycles of air pressure. Sonority has this power to create territories. (Ferraz, 2010, p.2)

The following invitation is realizing strong convening power of music to create territories, places marked with a code, the code does not understand as a language, not as a system but just like anything that earn a periodic permanence. In a sense, any permanence draws a territory, is a brand that expressed a place, in short, anything that has a permanence becomes code and, is the clash between codes that is born a territory, and other territories can be born of the clash between territories.

The music is then one of those engines that have for making territory, but we cannot help thinking of the strands of deterritorialization, because if the frequency is not maintained throughout the territory it could collapse. If the repeated drum beat makes marching, singing melodies doing other connections between sounds doing / undoing these often safer grounds paradoxically now sometimes require shelter, the walls that protect often become walls that encloses, and is at this moment, this tiny point of time and space, the walls seem to show cracks, flaws, pulled threads that can collapse all vectors that can build or deconstruct the territory vectors that carry information. It could also be thought in terms of a ‘musical arrangement’, which is a way of adapting

an abstract plan of music to a particular performer and performance. (Buchanan, 2015. p. 383).

The song, which is resonance feelings / rhythms / movement / memories / etc., does not require a code to have a meaning, it just means the simple code-lined symbols and definitions for a non-linear code, but explicit, which is the creativity. The very breaking pattern can create a much more interesting and subjective than the repetitive and fixed music in past moral dogmas.

In fact, this new concept, apparently simple, since daily, is rather abstract and almost is nothing, if not immediately adjective. The problem is that we are not dealing with a simple word operational, which helps us to indicate something, as when we say, “This is a guitar”. Because rather than ask, “What’s that?” Not remake the question seeking any specific data, which would be the properties of something, “what has that?” And perhaps Deleuze has found in Spinoza a more relevant question: “what can?”; “what can a body?”

When we talk about music worth thinking “what can the music?” or even “what are the backgrounds of music?”; it is thus that a whole framework of natural forces revolves around which we produce music and musicalities with young people. The territory and its deterritorialization happened by performances of a field of forces, turns varied and offset that reverberated into the codes of musical learning, at the same time that they have created, with the group of students, the opportunity of a people not yet existing, powerful invention that the fabulation concept aggregates. This correlation with a people to come to Bogue (2011) occurs in the real trial, highlighting the effectiveness of work in fabulation that function as interventions in the universe of their social, political, institutional, natural materials and environments.

Extend the concept of fabulation by tying it to the fundamental aim of the arts – that of capturing the affects and percepts of sensation. Percepts are like landscapes in which the human being as subject no longer exists and yet remains diffused throughout the landscape; affects are intensities that traverse individuals and go beyond ordinary emotions and sensations. Percepts and affects exceed lived experience and our recollections of that experience. Fabulation, then, is one with the general artistic project of capturing percepts and affects via a general ‘becoming’. Fabulation’s specific mode of becoming is that of fashioning larger- than-life images that transform and metamorphose conventional representations and conceptions of collectivities, thereby enabling the invention of a people to come. (Bougue, 2005. p. 100).

Line two: The School, a Landscape

As a concept, the visual is an uninhabited area of the paradox; the paradox of the differences, and from a certain kind of dialectics between the text and the image or the enunciable and the visible.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the sensation appears in the visual arts as if everything were a *vision*, and this is one of the main problems when trying to

link sensation with contemporary art. Would it be possible to go on with an immanent critique of the experience and the sign within the resistance practices, which are the marks of an understanding of the art for these philosophers? Is it possible the critique of contemporary capitalism operating through the work of art, highly linked to the commercial character, in a movement of the economy of affections?

Contemporary art is derived from the removal, after the 1960s, of a sensation policy to search for an intervention in the reality, claiming the benefit of the discursive representations (it is worth remembering that cultural studies analyze the means of communications and the contemporary media also with that in mind, and its influence in the field of curricula studies is prominent from the mid-1990s).

The contemporary audiovisual universe can be characterized by the heterogenesis and multiplicity, which appropriate and reverse, for example, the visual and sonorous signs that comprise the pure temporality of the cinema, or that cast us in a universe of reproduction and plasticity, in which colors, light, texture and body are *only* dimensions from something visible.

This section of this paper invites to think of the visuals in connection with curricula and cultures. I gather concepts, experiences, images, and words from a graduated course called "Culture and School", from the State University of Campinas/ Brazil.

In 'School and Culture' - the proposal was for students to write a script and produce a film in which the school was a character – as in fiction, establishing the impossible, the freedom to turn the school into something that only existed in the script of audiovisual production. We worked with plastic arts, motion picture, sound, and audiovisual experimentations.

I have analyzed the students' production according to concepts by Gilles Deleuze, such as, the *landscape*.

In the audiovisual production of *Lousa Viva* (<http://vimeo.com/29485684>), we find a kind of individuation of the living - the living blackboard - in which the subjectivity of the object itself, and that is permeated by the subjectivities from the students in the group, creates a narrative style in which text and image concentrate at the surface, in the creation of a narrator in some kind of memory and delusion.

As presented in one of the student's reports and I quote:

The blackboard seeking, through narrative, to present its subjectivity and focusing on addressing the subjectivity from the students; therewith, we try to make a point that is not common reference: the view that stayed with us for so long, seemingly irrelevant is highlighted at the end of the video, when the word 'obsolete' appears, an effect of this attachment created by the impact that music helps to build.

Another relevant and subjective character of the video is in the images on the blackboard. Although, by overlapping images and a play of brightness and contrast, these images are unclear, they were written and constructed within the personal universe of each member of the group, almost like what the school has meant to each of them. This subjective nature of the video was also reflected in the construction of the narrative, because the text was built into the creative freedom of each student, and compiled into a great overview of the senses. (End of quote)

Final report of the course EL 683 A - School and Culture, June 2011, *Aruan Pereira da Costa*

The group suggested a creation where the sense erupts into a visual and resonant landscape.

(...) The meaning is never a beginning or origin, it is produced. It is not something to be discovered, restored or re-employed, but something to be produced through new machinations. It does not belong to any height, is not in any depth, but it is a surface effect, inseparable from the surface as from its own dimension. (Deleuze, 2006. p 75)

The sense is always an *effect*. Not only an effect on the causal sense, but an effect in the sense of "visual effect", "sound effect", or rather, surface effect, position effect, language effect. According to Deleuze, the sense only exists on the surface. The audiovisual *Lousa Viva*, for example, is only meaningful when it is presented, when sound and visual signs appear; it is eventful.

This idea of *event* can also be thought in connection with sensation. According to Ronald Bogue (2009), the landscape associated with the painting proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, is a sort of invitation for people to see how aesthetics creates landscapes within the world, and its connections with the universe of the sense.

Bogue suggests an association: the face as part of a process in which reality personifies (or creates personification); the landscape-face - from the sensation. He indicates, with Deleuze and Guattari, the potentials for thinking the relationship between an event and the sensation.

Similarly, the form of subjectivity, consciousness or passion, would remain completely empty if the faces did not form resonance places that select the real mental or sense, turning it in advance according to a dominant reality. The face is itself, redundancy. And it achieves redundancy with the redundancies of significance, or frequency, and also with the ones from the resonance or subjectivity. The face digs the hole that the subjectification needs to cross; it is the black hole of subjectivity as the consciousness or passion, the camera, the third eye (Deleuze & Guattari, 1996. p. 32).

With respect to the subjectivity, the face may be the locus of resonance from these two systems: the personification extends from the face itself to other parts

of the body, to the neighboring objects and surrounding environment. A passage of forces can then irradiate to include the entire landscape.

Could we understand that this is the paradox we have mentioned in the beginning? I believe this process of subjectivity can be associated with the face, the landscape and the school cultures.

The study and experimentation in audiovisual cultures are important innovations in curriculum studies. It opens up lines for rethinking sensation in the field of art, contributing for the continuous planning of the curriculum compositions.

CONCLUSIONS: POINTS OF VIEW OF CURRICULUM AND FREEDOM

What did we learn from the activities described in this paper in relation to the *curriculum* field? It traces in lines of freedom⁶.

The activities we have described suggest that the freedom is manifested at critical points in which some state or condition of things takes on a different state or condition. This sudden change to another quality of life or to a life that is lived in another degree of intensity is a possible result of what Deleuze and Guattari call lines of flight, and freedom is manifested in this kind of line.

Deleuze advises those who deterritorialize while seeking for freedom to stay away from the suffocating reification of institutions, to learn to draw lines of flight – these lines of flight, he adds, have always preexisted and are tracked by us. We have accepted the advice highlighted in the text of Boundas (2009), and our actions were towards opening gaps in educational institutions, inviting them to an ethics of drifting from a type of curriculum that promises to make us worthy of the event – the event that is not of our own making – through a process of counter-actualization that is undoubtedly of our traces.

The curriculum invented in our research is deformed in an exchange of forces: a certain zone of indiscernibility, certain forces, certain intensities of the institution are transferred to the invention of a virtual memory according to a line of flight; and reciprocally, certain intensities of the virtual are transferred to the institution, so that no one knows what dimension belongs to the other and vice versa. It operates in connections to the forces of the chaos. These forces move particles, and becoming, as a molecular dynamics, implies a change in the relationship between these particles. Words, images and music are, in our research projects, pre-existing, qualifying forms of creative experimentation and driving lines of freedom that extended becomings-imperceptible.

In the lacunar spaces of the invention, they bring to surface the political commitment to protect the school curriculum from a paralyzing capture.

⁶ According to Gil (2008), the Deleuzian concept of freedom is impersonal or not voluntary. It refers to the ability of change or transformation within or in between assemblages. In the text written with Guattari, this concept of freedom appears only 'disguised' in other concepts such as the lines of flight, the deterritorialization and the smooth space. In our context, the association made in relation to territory, becoming and freedom opens to imaginative pluralities that are only emerging at this point.

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