

**ON THE TRAIL OF EDUCATION IN ZYGMUNT BAUMAN: FROM SOLID  
MODERNITY TO LIQUID MODERNITY**

***NO RASTRO DA EDUCAÇÃO EM ZYGMUNT BAUMAN: DA MODERNIDADE  
SÓLIDA À MODERNIDADE LÍQUIDA***

***TRAS LA PISTA DE LA EDUCACIÓN EN ZYGMUNT BAUMAN: DE LA  
MODERNIDAD SÓLIDA A LA MODERNIDAD LÍQUIDA***



João Nicodemos Martins MANFIO<sup>1</sup>  
e-mail: jnmmanfio@gmail.com

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**Deputy Executive Editor:** Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

<sup>1</sup> UNISOCIESC University Center (UNISOCIESC), Joinville – SC – Brazil. Graduated in Social Sciences from the University of Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI), Master in Political Sociology - Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), PhD in Social Sciences – Anthropology - Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP), Post-doctorate in Education from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). Researcher at the Pierre Bourdieu Sociological Research Laboratory (LAPSB, PPGE/UFSC), Leader and researcher at the Center for Contemporary Sociology Studies: Zygmunt Bauman (NESC, UNISOCIESC), Professor in the Departments of Management and Education.

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**ABSTRACT:** The following work aims to find relationships between Bauman's thinking and education. To this end, it looks at books, articles and interviews and outlines a possible path to help researchers interested in promoting dialogues between the author and other specialists on the subject or even broadening the discussion and reflection on what he dealt with when he looked at the subject. By comparing his analysis from solid modernity to liquid modernity and based on what can be found about education in it, we suggest and present a version of what can be called education in Bauman. By finding these traces and raising the possibilities of using his work to broaden debates in this area, we feel encouraged to build a possible connection with other authors. This challenge resulted in a proposal, still initial, to connect Bauman (2007), Freire (2011) and Gimonet (2007).

**KEYWORDS:** Education. Solid Modernity. Liquid Modernity. Alternance.

**RESUMO:** *O trabalho a seguir objetiva encontrar as relações entre o pensamento de Bauman e a educação. Para tanto se debruça sobre livros, artigos, entrevistas e traça um caminho possível para auxiliar pesquisadores interessados em promover diálogos entre o autor e outros especialistas do tema ou mesmo ampliar a discussão e a reflexão sobre o que tratou quando se debruçou sobre o assunto. Cotejando sua análise desde a modernidade sólida até a modernidade líquida e com base no que se encontra a respeito da educação nela, sugerimos e apresentamos uma versão do que se pode chamar de educação em Bauman. Ao encontrar esses rastros e levantar as possibilidades de utilizar seu trabalho para ampliar os debates nessa área, sentimo-nos encorajados a construir uma possibilidade de conexão com outros autores. Desse desafio resultou proposta, ainda inicial, de conexão entre Bauman (2007), Freire (2011), Gimonet (2007).*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Educação. Modernidade Sólida. Modernidade Líquida. Alternância.

**RESUMEN:** *El siguiente trabajo pretende encontrar enlazamientos entre el pensamiento de Bauman y la educación. Para ello, se examinan libros, artículos y entrevistas y se esboza una posible ruta para ayudar a los investigadores interesados en promover diálogos entre el autor y otros especialistas en el tema o incluso ampliar el debate y la reflexión sobre lo que él trató al abordar el tema. Contrastando su análisis de la modernidad sólida a la modernidad líquida y a partir de lo que en él se puede encontrar sobre la educación, sugerimos y presentamos una versión de lo que se puede llamar educación en Bauman. Al encontrar estas huellas y plantear las posibilidades de utilizar su obra para ampliar los debates en esta área, nos sentimos animados a construir una posible conexión con otros autores. Este desafío resultó en una propuesta, aún incipiente, de conectar Bauman (2007), Freire (2011) y Gimonet (2007).*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Educación. Modernidad Sólida. Modernidad Líquida. Alternancia.

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## Introduction: which trails to follow?

This article aims to assist researchers in the field of education, sociology and anthropology in their search for the theme of education within the vast work of Zygmunt Bauman. The author's perspective on this point could be divided into three perspectives, as suggested by Sarid (2017): the transition from teaching to learning; the nature of knowledge in liquid modernity; and the responsibility of individuals in the face of current scenarios. Throughout the article, we will discuss his ideas and seek to construct an analysis of Bauman's thoughts on education. To do so, we will rely not only on the works in which he directly addresses the topic, but also on his basic works<sup>2</sup>, interviews and commentators. Through detailed bibliographical research, interpretation, and exposition of arguments found in his works and scrutinizing important aspects for educational analysis, we built this search and investigation work.

The most interesting path for the researcher looking for education in Bauman begins by searching for subtitles and specific chapters of his books (generally not specifically dedicated to the topic), articles and some interviews, these being the ones where the perspectives of the author given the fact that he was provoked on the subject by interlocutors/interviewers.

In the following books by Bauman, translated into Portuguese, it will be possible to find the author dialoguing with education: 1. *The Individualized Society: lives told and stories lived* (Bauman, 2008), in which there is a chapter entitled “Education: under, for and despite postmodernity”; 2. *Parasitic Capitalism* (Bauman, 2010a), in which there is a chapter entitled “The Culture of Supply: New challenges for education/The teacher/student relationship in the liquid-modern phase”; 3. *Is ethics possible in a world of consumers?* (Bauman, 2011a) in which there is a chapter entitled “Hustly life, or liquid modern challenges for education”; 4. *44 Letters from the Modern Liquid World* (Bauman, 2011b), in which there are 3 chapters entitled “The world is inhospitable to education” (same title in three parts); 5. *Legislators and Interpreters* (Bauman, 2010b) has chapter 5 entitled “The education of people”; 6. *Liquid life* (Bauman, 2007a) there is the chapter entitled “Learning to walk on quicksand”; 7. *This is not a diary* (Bauman, 2012) you can find the topic “ On why students are agitating again”; 8. *Moral Blindness: the loss of sensitivity in liquid modernity* (Bauman, 2014) has a chapter entitled “University of consumption: the new sense of insignificance and the loss of criteria”; and book

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<sup>2</sup>I consider the works that mark the most important phases of the author's thought to be fundamental, especially the second (modern) and third phase (mosaic), as I showed in the doctoral thesis “A biobibliography and possible dialogues with education” defended in 2017 at PUC/SP.

9. About Education and Youth (Bauman, 2013) is the only book dedicated to the topic of education (in the form of an interview).

In Spanish, there is a book entitled *The challenges of education in liquid modernity*<sup>3</sup> (translation by the author). This small book demonstrates Bauman dealing with education in the liquid era in a direct way and in a way that is rarely seen. We find arguments similar to those reproduced in some articles on education available in English. It is also important to search for texts not yet translated into Portuguese, by Bauman and his commentators, as there is more material from analysts outside Brazil on this subject. We could mention, among them, the interesting articles by Green and Gary (2016), Sarid (2017), Best (2015) and the recent book by Ferris (2023). They all comment, question and highlight Bauman in/with/about education.

A synthesis of Bauman's thinking on education, which is why one of the most important interviews given, can be found in the one carried out in 2009 by professor Alba Porcheddu<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, it is important and fundamental to highlight the pioneering work in Brazil on the author's relationship with the theme of education, "Bauman & Education" by Almeida, Gomes and Bracht (2009)<sup>5</sup>, the book "Emancipation and difference in education: a reading with Bauman" by Almeida and Bracht (2006), the work "Readings on Zygmunt Bauman and education" organized by Fávero, Tonieto and Consaltér (2019), the "Zygmunt Bauman Critical-Hermeneutic Dictionary", organized by Cassol, Manfio and Silva (2021) in which it is possible to find entries that greatly help in understanding the author's work on the topic in question and many others and the book "Teaching and education in liquid-modern times" by Silva *et al.* (2022).

There are still many ways to go when it comes to education in Bauman's thinking, especially in Brazil, but the work below allows the reader to explore some vigorous possibilities that will help them embark on their searches and, we hope, encourage new proposals. That's what Zygmunt Bauman asked me when we were together, at his home, in the city of Leeds (Manfio, 2013; 2016) on the occasion of two interviews<sup>6</sup> whose themes are exactly focused on this area.

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<sup>3</sup>Originally published in 2003, in the magazine Diogenes, nº 50: 15-26, with the title *Educational Challenges of the Liquid-Modern Era*, later translated into Spanish and published in book form by the Spanish publisher Gedisa, in 2007, with the title *Los retos de la educación en la modernidade líquida*.

<sup>4</sup>Zygmunt Bauman: interview about education. Pedagogical challenges and liquid modernity. Alba Porcheddu. Translated by Neide Luzia de Rezende and Marcelo Bulgararelli. Cad. Research. vol.39 no.137. São Paulo May/Aug. 2009.

<sup>5</sup>The book *Bauman & a Educação* (2009) by Editora Autêntica is the pioneer in the analysis of the relationship between Bauman and education in Brazil.

<sup>6</sup>The reader can find and watch them at: [www.youtube.com/@joaonicodemosmartinsmanfio4255](http://www.youtube.com/@joaonicodemosmartinsmanfio4255).

The first clues are linked to questions raised by Bauman throughout his career, when he tries to observe, analyze and criticize social changes resulting from liquid modernity. It is because there have been important social changes that education also needs to change and reinvent itself. But it will first be necessary (and also prudent) to understand and try to explain these changes and their effects on the transition between solid modernity and liquid modernity (as we will address in topic 2). Only then will it be possible to understand in what ways and on what basis it would be viable to talk about an education in liquid modernity or even a “liquid education”. At the end of the article, we imagine possible paths about possible connections with education authors. Finally, we suggest and propose a dialogue with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 2011) and the Pedagogy of Alternation (Gimonet, 2007) and show that education in Bauman can be a fertile and extremely important ground for thinking about education today.

### **Social changes as first clues**

When asked about education, Bauman used to say that what was predicted half a century ago seems to have arrived with overwhelming force. The school, educators and educational institutions, believing that they were agents and sole guardians of legitimate and necessary knowledge, “passed by”, did not realize that the world was changing, that new demands and needs emerged, which in youth progressively increased the lack of interest in institutionalized knowledge transmitted in a context of unquestionable discipline, that the production system would no longer be interested in abstract knowledge that has little relationship with the world of work. In this regard, Bauman stated in a recorded interview, held at his home in the city of Leeds, in 2012:

It means that if you want to change society, education is the way, not revolution, but education. You have to correct and redesign the internal predispositions of the human being to reorganize the perceptions of the world. It's not easy. The problem with it not being easy these days is because no one really knows where the strength of the action of educating lies. Are you at school? At the University? On the Internet? In the streets? In commercials? You've probably been confronted by Walmart for more commercials than your grandfather was in his entire life. These are all educational forces. The impact of the school chair is limited! If you want to go another way you have to swim against the current. This is, in a way, the problem with education (Manfio, 2013, p. 5, our translation).

In this new scenario, which does not exclude old problems that have not yet been resolved, other challenges arise, new problems, diverse situations and difficulties, the severity

of which educational agents and educational institutions are unable to capture and address. With these reflections, we intend to examine the challenges that the new historical stage poses to education, but without having carried out specific studies on the sciences of education, it is a bold adventure to try to understand the complexity of Zygmunt Bauman's work, which he did not elaborate, *stricto sensu*, determined theory on the subject.

The dimension of this adventure can be found in one of the *44 Letters from the Liquid Modern World* about parents and children:

In Robert Bresson's film, *The Devil, Probably* (1977), the heroes of an era, when there was no sign of the technology of PCs, cell phones, *iPods* and other wonderful means of socializing/separating, contacting/isolating, connecting/disconnecting, are confused young people who desperately seek to find a purpose for their lives, for the place that has been assigned to them and for the meaning of that place. They did not receive any help from their elders. In fact, no adult is seen during the 90 minutes of the film, until its tragic ending. [...] when, exhausted by so many feats, the hungry kids gather around a refrigerator full of food provided for such an eventuality by their parents, until then ignored and invisible characters. The three decades following the film's release served to demonstrate and confirm the prophetic character of Bresson's work (Bauman, 2011b, p. 48, our translation).

It is a bleak picture for parents and educators to realize that the primary function of helping children and disciples discover a meaning for life has undergone a dramatic change, reducing them to the primarily biological condition of being providers of physical subsistence. Even more poignant is seeing that the young people were grouped together to desperately search for meaning in their lives and there was no adult to accompany them. What was prefigured as pathetic, forty years ago, according to Bauman, has become an everyday matter. At the time the film was released,

[...] the role of parents consisted of instilling in their children, at all costs, the permanent self-discipline necessary to endure the monotonous routine of a factory or a barracks; at the same time, parents had the role of representing exemplary models of this "norm-regulated" behavior for young people (Bauman, 2011b, p. 49, our translation).

There are many questions that could be posed to parents and educators raised by the film. Among them, perhaps, the most demanding, the absence of both. Where were they while their children and students gathered to reflect on their lives? The fact that, before opening the refrigerator, they occupied themselves with things related to life projects, which could be shaped into collective reflections, does not demonstrate that young people also understand the meaning of life in a dimension that goes beyond the pure consumption of goods?



Doesn't it also suggest the need for adults to assist them in dealing with the anxieties and uncertainties proposed by the new world order that wants to make them compulsive consumers? Aren't they waiting for the advent of a more hospitable world (Bauman, 2011a) that would make it possible to foster conviviality among themselves and among other young people in the world? Would people still be open to the utopia of another, less evil world? And, in the end, what kind of values would they be willing to incorporate as ethical supports to direct their own lives?

From *Legislators and Interpreters*, *Modernity and Holocaust* and *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Bauman criticizes modernity and “utopias/dystopias”, as well as increasing his interest in the theme of morality (Bauman, 1998; 1999; 2010b). From these works, the key concept becomes that of *order*, which becomes fundamental for the analysis of modern civilization. In the trilogy above-mentioned, this concept appears as central.

The idea of *the empire of order* appears in *Legislators and Interpreters* (Bauman, 2010b). It shows that actions in modernity are predictable because they are not subject to chance and an unrestricted hierarchy. The author shows that a monopolistic right to attribute meaning and judge all forms of life from the superior point of view of this monopoly is the essence of the modern social order (Bauman, 1999).

Therefore, the rational and cognitive standards that are the key for societies to proceed in an orderly manner, attentive to any possibility of inflection, would be defined. Bauman analyzes, however, that the modern dream ended up reproducing the opposite, which he calls ambivalence. Utopia turned into dystopia. Bauman analyzes, in *Liquid Modernity* (Bauman, 2001), the ideas contained in *Brave New World*, by Huxley, and *1984*, by Orwell, with regard to the predictions they made:

What they shared was an inkling of a tightly controlled world; of individual freedom not only reduced to nothing or almost nothing, but sharply rejected by people trained to obey orders and follow established routines; of a small elite who pulled all the strings – in such a way that the rest of humanity could spend their entire lives moving like puppets; of a world divided between administrators and administered, designers and project followers (Bauman, 2001, p. 65, our translation).

Modern society was characterized by being the empire of order, defining itself as a control function that seeks to maintain the course of events without being subject to any type of previously established unforeseen events or variations. It would be imposed on the world in order to structure perspectives for knowing how to act. It shows that the dream of an ordered

society ended up reproducing, in fact, the opposite. He highlights this with the concept of *ambivalence*.

Order and ambivalence are equally products of modern practice; and neither has anything except modern practice – continuous, vigilant practice – to back it up. Both share the typically modern contingency and lack of foundation of being. Ambivalence is probably the most genuine concern and care of the modern era, since, unlike other defeated and enslaved enemies, it grows in strength with each success of modern powers. Its very failure is that the ordering activity is constructed as ambivalence (Bauman, 1999, p. 23, our translation).

By using order as a foundation to establish itself, the State presents philosophers as the accredited holders of genuine reason. Science would be the guarantee that people are truly forged and moldable to the desire of the established order and the standard desired by society based on this logic. The legislator is the one who has the role of qualifying, selecting, disciplining, ordering, and standardizing people who are maladjusted or outside the standards.

In this way, it highlights how close the figure of state power is to the strategy of legislative reason, committed to imposing a desired order on rebellious reason, in addition to working together to implement controlling forms and resources over society, imposing divisions and separations. They establish an incessant homogenization of culture and standardization and simultaneous rigidification of the characteristics that should be followed for society to prosper in a “sustainable” and “productive” way. If he called intellectuals legislators, he reserved the analogy of the Gardener for the State.

In *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Bauman, 1999) the analogy that coins the term *Gardener State* appears, specifically when analyzing the speeches made by Darré (Nazi minister of agriculture) in 1930, by Erwin Bauer (Director of the Kaiser Guilherme Institute for Reproduction Research) in 1934 and Martin Stämmeler (doctor) in 1935.

Anyone who leaves plants in the garden abandoned will soon find with surprise that the garden is overrun with weeds and that even the basic characteristics of the plants have changed. If, therefore, the garden must continue to be the cultivation ground of plants, if, in other words, it must rise above the harsh reign of natural forces, then the conforming will of a gardener is necessary, of a gardener who, creating conditions suitable for cultivation or keeping away dangerous influences, or both, carefully cultivates what needs to be cultivated and ruthlessly eliminates the weeds that deprive the best plants of nutrition, air, light, sun... We are therefore realizing that questions of cultivation are not trivial for political thought, that they must on the contrary be at the center of all considerations... We must even affirm that a people can only achieve spiritual and moral balance if a well-conceived plan of



cultivation occupies the center even from their culture [...] (Bauman, 1999, p. 36, our translation).

The analyzed speeches, with which he constructed the analogy, were guided by an understanding of science as an instrument for achieving the mission of having an orderly and healthy society. They had in common the idea that modern society necessarily needed to tame chaotic natural forces, at any cost, through a rational scientific plan. Science would be at the service of order and life in order to constitute “social engineering” capable of generating progress and making society perfect, which legitimized and favored disastrous historical events. The 1973 Nobel Prize winner Konrad Lorenz, for example, declared in 1940:

There is a certain similarity between the measures that need to be taken when we draw a broad biological analogy between bodies and malignant tumors, on the one hand, and a nation and the individuals within it who have become antisocial due to their deficient constitution, on the other hand... Any attempt at reconstruction using elements that have lost their nature and characteristics is doomed to failure. Fortunately, the elimination of such elements is easier for the public health doctor and less dangerous for the supra-individual organism than such a surgical operation would be for the individual organism (Lorenz *apud* Bauman, 1999, p. 37, our translation).

This *Gardener State* transforms modern culture into an immense flowerbed where the gardener will always be attentive to care, carry out the necessary maintenance and organization so that unexpected deviations do not occur. What is allowed is for society to bear the expected fruits. It cannot, under the gardener's eyes, develop autonomy to the point of building its own resources (weeds). The *Gardener State* must be present so that no disorder occurs and no undesirable plants, in the eyes of the planner, invade the fertile ground of this order. Weeds would cause chaos and problems for the imposed order. Even though the nature of these weeds is not necessarily to ruin the proposed project, they are treated in this way (fought as enemies), because they are something that was not proposed to be installed in the middle of the plan of order.

Bauman calls these waste generated by the segregation and ordering of society *strangers*, as they represent, for the established order, intrusions into the ordering system, anomalies that must be contained and rectified. This is a declaration of war on the threat of ambiguity. Mere existence was a concern for the planners of the ordering state, but, as Bauman said: “Underdetermination is their strength: because they are nothing, they can be everything.” (Bauman, 1999, p. 65, our translation)

The most radical and dramatic case of this obsession would be the Holocaust implemented by Hitler, in the search for a perfect, *weed-free society*. Even with all this power of reason, it was not possible to prevent catastrophes from occurring in the 20th century (Auschwitz, Gulags, Hiroshima, two World Wars, the drama of today's refugees).

By breaking with the scientific idea that norms and precepts can determine what is *correct* and *healthy*, Bauman suggests the search for ways out so that these social dramas do not happen again. One must invest in the study of morality, according to him, in the assessment that the different can contribute to the evolution of society, that solidarity and collaborative systems with others and those supposedly different are effective ways to overcome prejudices established by culture, tradition and manipulation of “rights” and “wrongs”.

Ethics is a social product because morality is not. If sociology is the study of society, it is and can only be, consciously or not, an investigation into the ways in which ethical norms are constructed and made effective, the ways in which choices are made by and for human beings, the alternative possibilities promoted, repressed and, in other ways, manipulated. If this is what sociology is destined to do, then the “ethical neutrality” often demanded of sociologists is hypocrisy or self-delusion. Societies are “coordinated choices” and any society that is studied is one reality among many, one choice among many. Like all choices, this society can be good or bad, but it can always be improved. [...] Being moral means never feeling good enough. I tend to believe that this feeling is behind the endemic impulse to transcend, and is due to it the notorious dissatisfaction of human beings in relation to anything that is human (Bauman, 2011a, p. 55-56, our translation).

For Bauman, sociology must investigate the moral sense and for this reason he proposes a humanist and emancipatory sociology. Its intention is to make the familiar strange, or to allow reflection on society beyond common sense. This common sense full of dichotomies leads to ambivalence, which is another fundamental concept for the author, in contrast to the idea of order. If common sense makes things seem natural, determinism ends up masking reality as if it were necessary to do so.

Postmodernity (or liquid modernity) would be the modernity in which the dice could be rolled without being biased by a previously established power. This may give the impression that the problems will be solved, but with new freedoms, new challenges and problems will arise. In *Postmodern Ethics* (1997):

[...] the novelty in the postmodern approach to ethics consists first and foremost not in the abandonment of characteristically modern moral concepts, but in the rejection of characteristically modern ways of dealing with its moral problems (i.e., responding to moral challenges with coercive normative regulation in political practice, and with the philosophical search for absolutes,

universals and foundations in theory). The great themes of ethics – such as human rights, social justice, balance between peaceful cooperation and personal self-affirmation, synchronization of individual conduct and collective well-being – have not lost any of their relevance. They just need to be seen and treated in a new way (Bauman, 1997, p. 11, our translation).

Ambivalence represents this range of possibilities, of indeterminacy and confusion that opposes the idea of order. The *modern project* tried to end ambivalence, without success, because, as the results of the fight against disorder tried to dissolve it, they ended up proving counterproductive.

### **The trails that take us from solid modernity to liquid modernity**

Modernity was lasting (solid), said Bauman, but the mutation it underwent, which he called liquidity, made the movement temporary and the impossibility of maintaining a single established form. At this stage, the structure of life is not characterized by implemented routines, imposed traditions, but rather by avoiding standards and incessantly seeking new things. It's about living today without worrying about tomorrow. What was done yesterday doesn't matter today.

The modern spirit was animated by an overwhelming desire for solidity and nurtured a hope for perfect solids, discarding new improvisations and offering rest and tranquility where restlessness and heavy, boring work were the norm (Bittencourt, 2011, p. 8, our translation).

Exemplifies with work ethics. Having the stability provided by working in a large company would be a form of contribution to society that would then be followed by successors. Today, the relationship between company and employee is not linked by life and career planning in a specific company, but rather by comfortable well-being for both sides. From then on, society shows that work stops being the basis of ennoblement and honor, for which we live, and becomes an incessant search for consumption, purchasing power and the joy of buying. In this way, the individual who produces to satisfy his own basic needs leaves the scene and someone who works to consume (unrestrainedly) enters the picture.

Today's culture is made of offers, not norms. As Pierre Bourdieu observed, culture lives on seduction, not regulation; of public relations, not of police control; from the creation of new needs/desires/demands, not from coercion. This new society is a society of consumers. And, like the rest of the world seen and experienced by consumers, culture also becomes a warehouse of products destined for consumption, each competing with the others to capture the fickle/wandering attention of potential consumers, in the hope of attracting it

and keep it for little more than a brief second (Bauman, 2010a, p. 33-34, our translation).

The statement that global capitalism, in the liquid-modern phase, reduced society to an organic biological condition of consumers sounds like a pathetic apocalyptic alarm for educators accustomed to telling students that humanizing, personality-building relationships are established between them. Relationships of cultivating virtues as a prerequisite for an honorable life throughout the future.

This educational philosophy, anchored in the Enlightenment, according to Bauman, sank with the solid society. One could allude to the transition from one era to another when remembering the gas lamp – it partially lit up a few streets in the city for a few hours – replaced by LED lamps, which make modern temples of consumption paradisiacal and fairy-like environments for twenty and four hours a day. Bauman (2010a, p. 36, our translation) says that “unlike the era of nation-building, liquid-modern culture does not have “people” to cultivate, but customers to seduce”.

It sounds disappointing, for an educator focused on the solid conviction that it is his role to help students cultivate character, to hear from Bauman that there are no longer people but clients sitting on the school benches. However, affronts to teachers are growing with the youthful petulance of those who constitute the most important part of the teaching relationship. If conflict breaks out in the private school, the arrogance of young people increases, as they invoke the supremacy of the customer over the supplier to determine the nature of the relationship between them.

The near impossibility, on the part of educators, of understanding what happens inside schools arises from the lack of awareness of what is happening outside them or from the enlightened refusal that it is legitimate for the student to enthrone himself as the leader of the educational process. Educators believe that they must work to change society from the perspective of educational philosophy, however, society is moving in another direction and Bauman repeatedly hits the same chord in the various interviews he gave.

However, it seems that the current crisis is different from those of the past. The challenges of our time inflict a severe blow to the true essence of the idea of pedagogy formed in the dawn of the long history of civilization: the “invariants” of the idea are problematized, the constitutive characteristics of pedagogy itself (which, unscathed, have resisted changes in past); convictions never before criticized are now considered guilty of having run their course and therefore need to be replaced (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 1, our translation).

It seems that something is being explained that is too impossible or contradictory to be understood and assumed by educators as a new platform necessary for their self-definition as teaching professionals. Basically, it is a rigorously philosophical requirement, to stop being what you are – a cultivator of people – and become a supplier of knowledge to sovereign clients who enjoy autonomy when choosing this or rejecting that knowledge. The teacher feels nullified in his very essence: deprived of greater symbolic capital - his own intellectual and pedagogical authority -, and deprived of the competence to determine what should be taught and learned, he gives up (burnout syndrome) from the ancient profession. Devalued and without public recognition, he remains in schools to fulfill the schedule, awaits the dreamed day of manumission made possible by retirement and no longer feels ethically responsible for the failure of education.

Part of the teaching profession seems to resignedly accept the fate of residing in the history museum. Just like the gas lamp and the cannon, this one was adopted by Bauman as a symbol to say that teachers were trained to teach classes as if they had to fire a shot from a cannon, whose trajectory, target, distance and power are determined in the act of the shot. As for smart missiles, which he adopts to suggest the character of liquid modernity, something radically new happens:

[...] unlike old ballistic devices, they learn in the air. Therefore, they must initially be endowed with the ability to learn and learn quickly. This is obvious. What is less evident, although no less important within a rapid learning capacity, is the ability to instantly forget what has been learned before. Intelligent missiles would not be intelligent if they were not capable of “changing their minds”, or of revoking previous “decisions”, without thinking twice and without remorse... (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 5, our translation).

This seems to be the transformation that is being asked of educators: that they go from shooting obsolete cannons to becoming supervising engineers of intelligent missiles. As nature does not make leaps, in the popular saying, it is unlikely that the teaching profession will be able to accomplish this feat, continuing to work within scrapped schools that resemble museums.

For teachers who move on the basis of sensitivity, who believe they are artisans of life and therefore still find the strength to continue educating, Bauman (2009, p. 99, our translation) suggests a strategy for changing themselves:

Practicing the art of life, making your existence a “work of art”, means, in our liquid modern world, living in a state of permanent transformation, perpetually redefining yourself by becoming (or at least trying to become) a different

person from the one you have been until then. “Becoming someone else” means, however, ceasing to be who you have been until now, breaking and removing the form you had, just as a snake gets rid of its skin or an oyster from its shell; reject, one by one, the used personas – which the constant flow of “new and better” available opportunities reveals to be worn out, too narrow or just not as satisfying as they have been in the past.

There seems to be an abyss facing the teaching profession. The teacher is asked to perform unprecedented acrobatics to make himself another teacher, to deconstruct his means of work, his intellectual capital, and his way of being, to relativize his own beliefs and convictions built throughout his existence, generally suffered, to assume other roles and ways of being. In this regard, Bauman does not minimize the rigor of the demands that liquid-modern society makes on the teaching profession as a whole, if the desire is to appear as the protagonist of history:

What follows (isn't it?, they would ask) is that the skill we really need to acquire is, first and foremost, flexibility (a name neutralized, and therefore politically correct these days, for pusillanimity) – the ability to forget and promptly discard old assets turned into liabilities, as well as the ability to change courses and tracks immediately and without remorse; and that what we need to remember eternally is the need to avoid a lifelong oath of loyalty to anything or anyone (Bauman, 2009, p. 91, our translation).

The theoretical foundation of Bauman's advice seems to be rooted in the evidence of historical inexorability. Everything will calm down. What is ceases to be. What does not exist comes into existence. Things that were worth in the past no longer have value.

School is slow to incorporate truths that escape immediate everyday life. Masters take time to experience them, on the contrary, the idea of being enthroned artisans of transmitting the legacy of knowledge and values accumulated throughout history sounds positive to them and they were trained to do this type of craft well.

If, in the past, in the “solid” era, in the time of the steam locomotive, the gas lamp, the ox cart, teachers could enjoy this autonomy to do or not do certain things related to their own continuing education, today they have lost this freedom to stop doing. Either they change or disappear, it will be fate, according to the cold Baumanian perception, which insists on the need for change by indicating the essence of the issue:

During the “solid” phase of modern history, the landscape of human actions was created to emulate, as much as possible, the behaviorists' labyrinth model, in which the difference between right and wrong paths was clear and fixed, so that those who those who made mistakes or refused the right paths were constantly and immediately punished, while those who followed them



obediently and quickly were rewarded (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 2, our translation).

To exemplify this thesis, Bauman takes advantage of what was happening in the automobile industry – an icon of the triumph of solid modernity – and what was happening in national armies.

In the modern era, the great Fordist factories and the recruitment of masses into the armies, the two arms of panoptic power were the complete embodiment of the tendency towards routine stimuli and reaction to stimuli. “Dominion” consisted of the right to establish infringeable laws, monitor their compliance, determine obligations to remain under surveillance, realign deviants or exclude them, in the event of the failure of the effort to reform them. This model of domination required a reciprocal and constant commitment from administrators and those administered... “Solid” modernity was truly the era of lasting principles and concerned, above all, durable principles that were conducted and monitored with great attention (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 3, our translation).

According to Marx and Engels (1977), “everything that is solid melts into air”. History continued to be made in an unequal way in different territories or continents and in a diverse and contradictory way even within a country. In the universe dominated by the capitalist system, the Fordist management model became hegemonic and became universal as a mandatory reference for efficiency. Although it enjoyed prestige in the world of work, it took a while for it to enter organizations and be used in people management in non-manufacturing environments. In the universe of educational systems, it belatedly became known. The panoptic character<sup>7</sup> of Fordist administration

[...] was in the power to monitor and constrain workers on the production line. Henry Ford didn't want anything to do with administrators. But the result was that he misguided administrators, wrongly established positions, created a spirit of suspicion and frustration, disorganized his company, and failed to develop or even destroyed administrative staff (Drucker, 1973, p. 420, our translation).

The educational management, inspired by Fordism, adopted in many private schools in the recent past, combined what the popular saying states about what happens in the corrals: “the

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<sup>7</sup>“During the Enlightenment, Jeremy Bentham called a building with an observation tower in the center the Panopticon. The watchman who occupies it can, through an ingenious play of lights and shadows, control the surrounding circular space without being seen by the inhabitants. He is the One who observes everything. The obvious application of this project was the construction of prisons, hospitals and also asylums, even though Bentham was not fully aware of the scope of his invention. The alliance between political power and control and manipulation techniques has always attempted to recreate the conditions of the *panopticon*. The construction and dissemination of messages by centers of power “that occupy the control tower of the *panopticon*” daily propose to us interpretive keys to reality that are credible, but not true” (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 10, our translation).

master's gaze makes the ox fat". Through it and with it, the omniscience of the holder of political power, or social status, is praised, aristocratic atavisms that occurred in Brazilian public schools even in the recent past. This cultural deformation results in another hateful managerial behavior related to "portfolios" and the humiliations imposed by those in power. It is not without reason that Bauman uses the reference of "Fordism" to venture into the universe of educational management relations.

Engels, in the preface to the 1883 German edition of the Communist Manifesto states "that economic production and the social structure which necessarily follows from it, constitute in each historical epoch the basis of the political and intellectual history of that epoch" (Marx; Engels, 1977, p 17). This is what happened with capitalism, which evolved from "classic" – in the "solid" era – to globalized monopoly, in the liquid modern era. He changed his style, changed his very face, stopped managing through the panoptic model, or through the presumption of authority, to obtain workers' adhesion through more disguised means. In the field of management, globalized monopoly capitalism inaugurated Toyotism as an organic ideology of production (Alves, 2000).

Bauman does not mention the word "Toyotism" in his analyzes of the challenges of education, but they coincide, like the body and the shadow, with what analysts of this new management ideology say.

The core of Toyotism is the search for stimulated engagement in work, especially of the central worker, the stable employee, so that he can operate a series of organizational devices that support fluid and diffuse production (Alves, 2000, p. 04, our translation).

*Just-in-time* production, the spread of outsourcing, the flexibility of labor laws, adherence to the productive *ethos* as a sublime work of those who make it and the recognition that it is a superior privilege to be able to be accepted in that business corporation make common sense of the new ideology that is reminiscent of La Boétie's (1982) voluntary servitude, and in Bauman's terms:

In the "liquid" phase of modernity, the demand for conventional management functions is quickly exhausted. Domination can be obtained and guaranteed with a smaller expenditure of energy, time and money: with the threat of disengagement, or the refusal to commit, rather than with inopportune control or surveillance. The threat of disengagement drags the *onus probandi* to the other side dominated. Now, it is up to subordinates to behave in order to obtain consensus before their bosses and lead them to 'acquire' their services and individually created products (just as other producers and traders seek to persuade potential customers to desire the goods for sale). "Following the

routine” would not be enough to achieve this goal. [...] whoever wants to be successful in the organization that replaced the model of the principles of the occupation that we can define as a “mouse maze” must demonstrate joviality and communicative capacity, openness and curiosity, offering the person as a whole for sale, as a unique and irreplaceable value to increase the quality of the team. It is now the task of current and future employees to “self-control” to ensure convincing and likely approved services, even in the event of observers' changing tastes; on the contrary, bosses are not obliged to repress the idiosyncrasies of their subordinates, to homogenize behaviors or to confine their actions within the rigid structure of routine (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 3, our translation).

The categories, pointed out by Bauman, constitutive of the liquid-modern era are the new values of globalized capitalism that are progressively incorporated as values of humanity and, therefore, impose themselves as necessary.

[...] Fordism was still, in a way, an “included rationalization”, because, despite establishing a rationalized society, it failed to incorporate into the capitalist rationality of production the psychological variables of worker behavior, which Toyotism seeks to develop through of the mechanisms of worker behavior, which improve the control of capital in the subjective dimension (Alves, 2000, p. 11, our translation).

In this way, the individualized society is evident. Previously, the State supposedly provided security that no longer exists. Without the State to show the way, ambivalence is put to the test and enhanced by the consumer society. Errors and successes are deposited in each individual's account without anyone else being responsible for the events. At the same time, a “civic” social morality, an ethic of responsibility, does not develop.

By emphasizing the decline of the legislator, it does not mean that the State does not have the function of maintaining a certain order. It turns out that, in place of the almost lost control capacity in relation to the order of the garden, the State now seeks to maintain economic globalization. In this way, the market continues to segregate those it considers “foreign bodies” that cannot be removed or returned to society. These are carefully watched and placed on the margins of society, just as the gardener removed the weeds from the flowerbed.

In the case of Brazilian education, the issue reveals greater complexity, if looked at from the political window that shows the extent of the violence used to repress educators in Paraná on April 30, 2015. Or deduced from what sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso said, in exercise of the high office of president of Brazil, by denying what he had written and, later, by pronouncing blasphemy when he called teachers, on strike, “bums”. The press, always attentive to support initiatives that aim to keep Brazil harmonized with the interests of globalized capitalism, promptly defended the president's statement as “*realpolitik*”.

Another characteristic highlighted by Bauman (2005, p. 115, our translation) is revealed, which becomes evident when “trust is replaced by universal suspicion”, in which everything would be disposable. Forgetting becomes a striking everyday characteristic in the current era. What was previously treated as learning or an accumulation of events is, today, a culture of discarding, detachment or detachment from everything and everyone. Everything is related to the durability of time (increasingly shorter and faster) and transforms into what is called *liquid modernity*.

According to Bauman (2001), the countless spheres of contemporary society (public life, private life, human relationships) undergo a series of transformations whose consequences tear the social fabric apart. Such changes, according to the Polish sociologist, cause social institutions to lose their solidity and liquefy, becoming amorphous, paradoxically, like liquids. Liquid modernity, therefore, is a time of detachment, provisionality and the process of individualization; time of freedom at the same time as insecurity. As a response to this possibility of freedom (1998, 2000, 2001), men of this time, in the anonymity of the metropolises, have a feeling of unprecedented impotence, since, in the longing for this freedom, they find themselves on their own account and risk in the midst of concrete (Tfouni; Silva, 2008, p. 176, our translation).

Furthermore, this type of change from the solid era to the liquidity era is the loss of the traditional reference that previously existed as a result of tradition and imposed conservatism. The State, manager of these life models to be followed, goes through the transition that takes *life towards consumption*, in which the references of the past are replaced by private references (such as celebrities and models).

In the solid era, few watched many (State x people), currently, many watch few (people x celebrities). What can be received from post-modernity appears to be very useful and attractive when compared to the orderly and solid society of before, but how can we correctly manage and apply this wisdom we receive? Bauman avoided saying where the balance point of this equation is and where the middle ground between freedom and security will be.

### **A path to elucidate “liquid education”**

The relevance of Bauman's interpretation regarding the educational models of the modern era is frightening because it makes sense to think about them today. Gardens are cultivated as he imagined solid education would be done. The discourses may have changed, but the practices are still anchored in these ways, in most educational institutions, at all levels. The plants, originated and cultivated for centuries within these molds, ended up incorporating

this logic and any transplant to another location, any change in the way of cultivation, any forced alteration tends to annihilate them. Within this system, it seems that it is preferable to self-destruct, rather than trying to change anything in the process.

Not only do gardeners take care of the garden, but plants have already incorporated logic and become a fundamental part of the process of selecting exemplary and healthy seedlings to expand Bauman's thought-provoking analogy. Among the main reasons for student dropout from universities<sup>8</sup>, there are not only financial issues, as a preponderant factor, but also the self-perception that they do not fit into the system as it is (was it?). This second reason includes the feeling that the problem is with the excluded person who, in this way, takes the blame for the failure and still forgives or values the gardener who “tried to help him”. It is common to see people frustrated in the education system or, once outside of it, lamenting that “this is not for me” as if they were the only ones to blame for the failure they are subjected to. They naturalize not only the “incapacities” arising from difficulties throughout the processes (deficient teaching at previous levels), but also immobility in the face of exclusionary curricula or in the face of unprepared teachers, as some studies on the subject point out<sup>9</sup>.

The idea of civilization and aptitude for living in ordered societies could not find a better place to be realized than in the modern school where reason prevails, which, applied and imposed by teachers, would be the guardian of good coexistence and good manners. Evidently, institutions along these lines - with their gardeners - never looked favorably on the stranger and the undesirable who produced disorder, disturbed or threatened the ordering system. Undesirables should be purged and removed from this environment, such as black people, homosexuals, mentally ill people or any type of minority that could cause discomfort and disrupt the established order. This was the objective of education in solid modernity (only there?), whose greater objective [...]

[...] is to teach obedience. The instinct and the will to obey, to follow orders, to do what the public interest, as defined by superiors, demands to be done, were the attitudes that the citizens of a planned, programmed, exhaustive and

<sup>8</sup>According to Prestes, Fialho and Pfeiffer (2014): “ In the scenario of Brazilian university institutions, dropout rates affect both private (Martins, 2007) and public institutions (Fernandes *et al.* 2010; Morosini *et al.* 2011). It is observed that dropout rates have seen progressive growth in recent years, as shown by the Lobo Institute for the Development of Education, Science and Technology, whose dropout indicators in higher education showed considerable growth, given that in 2005 , was 22% and, in 2011, 37.9%. The study carried out by INEP (2006) showed that the phenomenon occurs in greater numbers in private HEIs with rates of 53% compared to public institutions with 33%. This is because private institutions represent almost 60% of the 2.7 million places available to students in entrance exams (Borges, 2011). In 2006, as shown by Silva Filho (2009), dropout rates in Brazil cost around six billion reais, that is, 811,000 students dropped out of their higher education courses before completion.”

<sup>9</sup>Professor Alfredo Veiga-Neto (UFRGS) has dedicated himself to the topic of curriculum. Published article: Curriculum and social exclusion (Veiga-Neto, 2001).

completely rationalized. The condition that mattered most was not the knowledge transmitted to students, but the atmosphere of training, routine and predictability in which this knowledge would be transmitted. [...] the type of conduct that would agree with the public interest would be determined by society prior to any individual action, and the only capacity that individuals would need to satisfy society's interest was that of discipline (Bauman, 2010a, p. 108, our translation).

By giving up the civilizing mission and demonstrating the plurality and multiplicity of cultures that goes against solid logic, the ordering State not only represses, but also loses the opportunity to include and expand possibilities. This would lead schools to stop being “temples of knowledge” and create models of culture superior to others that would supposedly end up not helping development. As said above, this wisdom and mentality in the land of ambiguities brings with it new difficulties.

In a time where consumption prevails, only those who have the power to consume are well off. The loss of control in social situations and the feeling of rebellion, since everything can transform and change from today to tomorrow, also causes the duty of solidarity to be lost. People want to live for themselves and not worry about others. There's no time for that. So, what can you expect from a teacher who lives in a postmodern society? Bauman's sociology tries to bring dialogue about other ethnicities into the conversation, to value differences as an instrument of liberation.

The adverse possibilities can be overwhelming, and yet a democratic (or as Cornelius Castoriadis would say, autonomous) society knows no substitute for education and self-education as ways of influencing change in events that can be framed in its own nature, while such nature cannot be preserved for long without a “critical pedagogy” – when education sharpens its critical edge, “making society feel guilty” and “shaking things up” by disturbing consciences. The destinies of freedom, of the democracy that makes it possible, at the same time as it is enabled by it, and of the education that produces dissatisfaction with the level of freedom and democracy achieved so far are inextricably linked and cannot be separated from each other. One can see this intimate connection as another kind of vicious circle – but it is in this circle, and only in this circle, that human hopes and the chances of humanity fall (Bauman, 2007b, p. 23, our translation).

As for the differences, we need to try to understand them without trying to combat them. School education in a liquid society has two paths: talk or perish. It is about carrying out dialogue between cultures, knowledge and diversity.

Brazilian culture was woven with the threads of ethnic plurality, differentiated by bringing together communities with diverse identities. According to anthropologist Ribeiro (1972), the Brazilian people, in relation to Asian or European peoples, can be classified as new



people, as they were formed based on an original fact, the installation of the colony. The ethnic and cultural matrices that formed it – autochthonous, African and European –, when mixed, created a new and different historical subject from that original composition.

Throughout the Brazilian civilizing process, each of these proto-matrices, in the beginning, and others from the nineteenth century onwards, due to the vigorous migration of other contingents of different nationalities, entered into a process of cultural melting, by losing their ways of being autochthonous and incorporate “Brazilian” ways of being. Today, in this ethnic-cultural scenario, there are other subjects demanding visibility who are fighting to be recognized and respected as legitimate Brazilian citizens. They are indigenous people, riverside dwellers, landless farmers, quilombolas, favela residents, groups of people who live in sub-human conditions.

Society moved, in solid modernity, towards the technicality of order with the aim of standardizing acts and actions. Liquid modernity questions the rationalized stance.

The civilizing process it triggered would have given rise to a dichotomy: on the active extreme side of the resulting spectrum, among cultural elites, a growing concern for training and education was generated. On the passive side, there was an increasing tendency to biologize, medicalize, and criminalize, which was achieved thanks to the development of a series of disciplinary technologies with the aim of monitoring and guiding people's conduct in the direction of rational order. (Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009, p. 19, our translation).

A proposal for education for all, public and quality education, needs to deconstruct the conception of the Gardener State and move towards the proposal of a State that shares solidarity and respect for differences. The emphasis on “for all, public and quality” is not superfluous. In Europe, education systems have not yet managed to universalize access or guarantee effective quality in education for young people. Europe does not enjoy the benefits of the knowledge society, [...]

[...] 150 million people in the European Union do not have this basic level of education and “are exposed to a greater risk of marginalization”. [...] [...] The task of achieving a “more global, tolerant and democratic” society marked by “greater civic participation, greater well-being and lower crime” is part of this reasoning mainly as a reminder, as a side effect: the hope is expressed that more educated people, instead of those inadequately trained, will “enter the job market” thanks to improved training (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 6, our translation).

If this is the size of the educational tasks in the European Union, how far is Brazil from getting closer to the level that would enable it to aspire to be “an educational homeland”? There

is an urgent need for society to realize the chicanery, if not hoaxes, that public authorities tend to use to pretend that they give priority to education, but, in reality, do not go beyond the threshold of discourse. Bauman cites Borg and Mayo (Porcheddu, 2009) to unmask the escapist strategy of public authorities regarding their responsibilities in guaranteeing educational provision.

[...] in these rigorously neoliberal times, the notion of self-managed learning lends itself to a discourse that allows the state to waive its responsibility to provide the quality education that every citizen of a democratic society has the right to possess (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 7, our translation).

In schools, it is imperative that educators realize their role as mediator and fight against the homogenizing culture.

When seeking ethical, cultural, religious and linguistic homogeneity, modern States developed an incessant propaganda of nationalist attitudes, inventing joint traditions and delegitimizing stubborn heritages that did not fit into the imagined communities under construction (Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009, p. 22, our translation).

Educators need to understand that “garden cultures” distance the process of knowledge and the construction of new norms that emerge from the conflict. “Wild cultures” enable the voice of those classified as different and thus allow a form of resistance to socialization (Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009). In the transition from the Gardener State, typical of solid modernity, to a State suited to today's society, whose characteristic is liquid modernity, we see the emergence of the aesthetics of consumption, which leaves behind the ethics of work. We come into contact with another way of life in which, according to Bauman “for people in the liquid modern world what matters is what can be done, not what should be done or what has been done” (Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, p. 35, our translation).

Along these lines, it can be observed that globalization led to the process of individualization of human beings and, as a result, removed the concept of collective solutions. In liquid modernity, it is observed that the exclusion of the Gardener State changed the profile that now excludes the “refuse of economic globalization”, that is, non-consumers or failed consumers (Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009).

Liquid modernity values freedom, which must be guided beyond the conception of the purely consuming condition. It must gain a space in this new society and less security, because there is a separation from social space when an individualized society is assumed. Freedom will provide the emergence of new social positions in the most diverse aspects, because there will

be distance from the model of ordered society, composed of a model that managed to suffocate the “weeds” (Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009).

Bauman puts on the agenda the discussion of the role of the educator and the school in this training process due to the need to give new meaning to the role of the educator who assumed the role of interlocutor of the Gardener State. Freedom, even if it is wrapped in the lure of consumption, becomes the object of analysis by the educator, who will come across ethnic, gender or religious diversity.

In the liquid-modern conception there are also difficulties to be faced since the treatment of the consumer profile is prioritized and flawed consumers are discarded. With this, it is necessary to restore respect for differences, or what Bauman calls looking at cultural plurality.

The proclamation of truth as a quality of knowledge, an unquestionable assumption of solid modern intellectuals, is unsustainable in post-legislation times. The new framework will only require intellectuals (teachers, therefore) to perform a much humbler task: that they be experts in the art of translating between different cultural traditions (Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009, p. 55, our translation).

Working with plurality in educational processes requires dialogue and understanding the role that each person plays in the learning space. One cannot suppress the space of the other, in such a way that the collective construction helps in the reframing of the group. If new pedagogical relationships do not emerge within schools, it seems inevitable that, progressively, students who consume knowledge will give up seeking it in schools and start hiring consultants.

The impetuous growth of new knowledge and the equally rapid aging of the old combine to produce, on a large scale, human ignorance that continually replenishes (and even feeds) its stores. [...] a stroke of luck for sellers and bad luck for buyers. For skilled school directors, this constitutes an opportune opportunity to raise funds and promote courses to develop the skills currently in demand, even though teachers with the necessary skills to transmit them shine because they do not have them. This is the market of suppliers, of potential customers who, by definition, are not in a position to judge the quality of the products on offer or become pedantic if they risk doing so. Inferior or useless, sometimes outdated or misleading, knowledge is easily sold and the more it is acquired, the less likely those deceived will discover the game (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 6, our translation).

Bauman (2005 *apud* Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009, p. 68, our translation) proposes that it is “the challenge of how to achieve unity in (despite?) difference and how to preserve difference in (despite?) unity”. Education, in the current context, needs to look at the most diverse cultures and adapt to the profile of liquid modernity. The student, in the consumer society, interacts in a globalized and ephemeral world.

[...] residents of liquid modernity prefer to follow the countless advisors, who show one of the many possibilities of how to go on in life, instead of listening to that teacher concerned with offering a single road, already quite congested, to be followed. And counselors, like everything else in consumer society, act not with a mechanism of repression, but of seduction (Bauman, 2002 *apud* Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009, p. 69, our translation).

It is necessary to explain how far we are from capturing the deeper dimensions of what Bauman claims to be the “art of life”, specifically when proposing as one of the requirements of education that of “adapting” the person to their time.

But the very idea of life as a permanent, forever adaptation to the permanent, forever demands of the world, which supported the use of rat experience to instruct future practitioners of human lives, would seem to them, as well as to their students, nebulous, if not altogether absurd and ridiculous (Bauman, 2009, p. 102, our translation).

In this context, it is not strange to find educators, students, parents, educational scientists and (teaching) legislators confused by having to face, on a daily basis, the avalanche of uncertainties and contingencies raised by the speed of change and the relativization of values, until then celebrated as permanent.

In the introduction to the book *Liquid Life*, Bauman reproduces a thesis by philosopher Richard Rorty that summarizes well the double challenge of education in liquid modernity: in addition to promoting socialization, that is, preparing people for the changeable world in which we live, individualization is presupposed in educational mechanisms, while avoiding decreeing what is right or true and provoking its manifestation, it consists of the exercise of agitating students and inciting them to doubt about the image they have of themselves and the society in which they are inserted, and, in this movement, challenge the prevailing consensus (Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009, p. 74, our translation).

Education for citizenship is urgent because it operates in a critical formation and assumes that strictly technical training does not achieve the need to overcome a Garden State.

For Veiga-Neto, there are some ways to identify the logic of liquidity operating in “liquid-modern curricula” or, as he prefers, post-modern ones. He cites as examples: (a) the commitment to implementing the famous transversal themes in school curricula, an alternative with the objective “(...) resolving and recovering, through interdisciplinarity, the alleged unity of the world that would have been broken in contemporary times (...)” (Almeida; Gomes; Bracht, 2009, p. 81, our translation).

In the presentation of the book *The challenges of education in liquid modernity* (Bauman, 2007b, our translation) there is Bauman's synthesis on technical training and education for citizenship:

[...] continued training should not be dedicated exclusively to promoting technical skills and training centered on work, but, above all, to training citizens who recover the public space of dialogue and their democratic rights, as a citizen ignorant of the political and social circumstances in which he is inserted will be completely incapable of controlling the future of these circumstances and the future of himself (back cover of the book).

In this book, he emphasizes permanent education and makes it the main challenge for students, schools and delivery systems. He bases his insistence that education must be permanent on the fact that change has been permanent.

In the liquid modern environment, education and learning, no matter how we use them, must be continuous and permanent. The determining reason why education must be permanent lies in the nature of the task that we must develop in the common path of “granting powers”, a task that is exactly how education should be: continuous, unlimited and permanent (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 8, our translation).

For “grant of powers” regarding the redemption of citizenship:

[...] the consumer is the enemy of the citizen. Empowering citizens requires the ability to make choices and act effectively based on the choices made, but it also requires the construction and reconstruction of interpersonal bonds, the will and the ability to continually engage with others to create a human coexistence in a hospitable and friendly environment; and, it also requires cooperation between men and women in the fight for self-esteem, aimed at reciprocal enrichment, the development of the potential of different subjects and the adequate enjoyment of their capabilities (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 8, our translation).

Marrying the knowledge developed in everyday school life and, more precisely, that of the university - the theoretical knowledge - with that acquired through experience has been a problematic and complex mission, considering that the school is guided by the didactic premise that knowledge is learned sequentially and continuously. The provision of education is made by separating the two areas, as said in jargon “school for our children and school for other people’s children”. It is the responsibility of universities to rescue the debate and take it beyond technical training, which, according to Morin (2015), is a space for transmitting and renewing the set of knowledge, ideas, values, and culture.

## Evidence of a dialogue with everyday life beyond school?

We do not develop a thesis on the relationship between Bauman and education, which would require another article, since the objective of this work was to show possible paths and highlight clues for those who aspire to bring him to the fore in their work and research. However, we risk stating that it is in the space beyond the classrooms that we will find possibilities of relating what the author brings us to the field of education. The Pedagogy of Alternation (Gimonet, 2007) and authors who think beyond the traditional space of the school can contribute to this reflection that also deals with Bauman's ideas.

The possibility of overcoming this historical contradiction pointed out by Bauman – learning/forgetting/learning again new knowledge that is useful for that passing moment – and enabling the marriage between what is taught at school and what is learned throughout life may be in Alternation Pedagogy.

Pineau, in *Temporalities in Formation*, observes:

[...] in the research of new educational temporalities of conquest of their time, the simple, most common thesis of permanent education is to say that, in fact, education would not be permanent, but alternating. Periods of training alternate with periods of work. The distinction between training time and working time is not transgressed, but articulated according to a new cycle. These times are no longer linked linearly, but are combined, organized to form in another way. In this sense, alternation constitutes a new social synchronizer of formation [...] (Pineau, 2003, p. 183, our translation).

The Alternation pedagogy was born in 1935, at the initiative of farmers in southwestern France<sup>10</sup>. Just like in most schools around the world, young people hated school. “It’s a pure waste of time”, said an angry young man when he refused to go to school (Gimonet, 2007). After listening to his father's advice about the importance of school to support his future life project, the young man countered “I want to do things with my hands, and school teaches me nothing”.

Some farmers, helped by the local parish priest, imagined a school that combined what is learned with the head with what is learned with the hands, and created, without knowing it, the Pedagogy of Alternation. Seventy years later, educator Rubem Alves (2005) said that the

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<sup>10</sup>In a chapter of the book *Doing education, doing politics: language, resistance and action*, I published, in co-authorship with Antônio João Manfio, *Freirian Pedagogy and Alternation in the formation of ecopedagogical consciousness*. In it you can find more information about the history of Alternation Pedagogy (Manfio; Manfio; 2014).



head thinks about the questions asked by the hands, in a clear allusion to the ancient articulation of “faber” with “sapiens”.

Pineau systematized the philosophy of Alternation education within the scope of permanent education, adult education and distance education. He stated that both the “permanent” and “distance” and “adult” dimensions are contained and enhanced in Alternation, but he warns, “copulative alternation, an action of effective co-penetration of the means of socio-professional and school in a unit of formative time (Pineau, 2003, p. 186). The adult

[...] cannot be seen only as a being that has just grown physiologically. Your becoming does not cease with the end of your growth, stamped by a final diploma, which seals your professional position in life. This becoming is linked to ongoing training that must combine periods of experiential training with periods of more formal training, according to ideal alternations to be created by each person. Seen in its current extension throughout the course of life, alternating formations thus need to deeply review anthropological theories and theories of formation and create a line of union between them (op. cit., p. 187, our translation).

Thus, it discards the false alternation, that made of mechanical juxtaposition of school tasks, some carried out at school and others at home or after school, or the internship activities carried out at the end of academic courses, a time of forgetting what was studied during the previous semesters.

New academic approaches to interdisciplinarity or transversality, by themselves, do not guarantee the effectiveness of copulative learning in the sense of Pineau (2003). There must be a methodical articulation of knowledge, a marriage between the two. From this perspective, (Brougère; Ulmann, 2012), in *Learning through everyday life*, open a wide window into the future and illuminate the path through which universities can “re-educate” themselves. They deal with the complex reality of learning outside of school, but they lack the perception of the method, which allows the articulation between knowledge, which does not invalidate the effectiveness of the teacher training proposal.

Although always sympathetic to Marx, Bauman never mentions him in conversations about education. However, it is important to remember the third thesis about Feuerbach, according to which the educator also needs to educate himself. To achieve this, stacking diplomas and lengthening the academic training time within a university (which suffers from outbreaks of madness and suicide!) is not enough, if done within the linear logic of the curriculum, or the juxtaposition of activities, even if be awarded the seal of interdisciplinarity.

It is observed that the curricular matrix works with contents whose analysis condition is focused on the specific doctrines and approaches of the area. Although teachers are able to broaden their vision by rescuing themes that permeate everyday life in society, they do not directly assume this responsibility, which sometimes requires aggregate knowledge from the student. Cross-cutting themes require an approach “through interdisciplinary, global and complex views, but which facilitate the understanding of phenomena that are difficult to explain from the perspective of one discipline” (Yus, 1998, p. 49, our translation).

Both the transversal and the interdisciplinary vision establish a paradigm shift for the specialist teacher, as it is necessary to retrieve knowledge in other areas and the consequent dialogue with new knowledge so that work in different areas generates global knowledge for the student. “This problem of interdisciplinarity has not yet been fully resolved in Brazilian universities” (Santos Filho; Moraes, 2000, p. 42, our translation).

“Part of today's educational problems arises from the Cartesian worldview, from the value system that underlies it, from psychological currents that have greatly influenced and continue to influence education” (Fazenda, 2008, p. 77, our translation). The Cartesian vision influenced and still influences teachers trained in this line of work who still experience difficulties in adapting and accepting this important interference of transversal and interdisciplinary action. When analyzing interdisciplinary practice, Fazenda (2003, p. 50, our translation) states that there are still educators who distort the practice from the way it was conceived and what is needed is a new pedagogy, that is, “we talked about the suppression of the monologue, the establishment of dialogue.”

The Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), following the position of developed countries, requires the application of transversal education in order to alleviate the unsatisfactory effects of the country's development (Yus, 1998). Teaching at the university needs to advance from the perspective indicated by Morin (2015). When referring to the need to awaken aspirations and a sense of responsibility, he states that “thought reform and teaching reform are not the only elements that can act, but represent an essential constitutive element” (Morin, 2015, p. 134, our translation).

The change in attitude of teachers and students has the potential to enable transformations in the sense of establishing more tolerance among human beings regarding different debates, as well as becoming the path to bringing together the complexity of fragmented knowledge. Morin (2015), like Bauman (1998), realized that we are susceptible to drifts in the course of events, as in the cases of Nazism and Stalinism. Victims of processes of

which they were not aware, many ended up reduced to a type of behavior that drives evil. Incomprehension builds barbarity in human relationships (Morin, 2015).

Cross-cutting action requires an interdisciplinary approach, which requires a repositioning of educational institutions that need to demonstrate to teachers the importance of going beyond their disciplines. “Disciplines dialogue when people are willing to do so” (Fazenda, 2003, p. 50, our translation), which demonstrates the need to overcome obstacles arising from the teaching staff and students that derive from their training.

From an ethical perspective, thinking in a transdisciplinary way leads to understanding and, consequently, brings together human beings who, in differences and complexities, seek unity (Morin, 2015). Along this path, we understand the need for educators to act as transformative agents and that society demonstrates a lack of citizenship training, as well as multifaceted training. “Specialized competence was replaced by multiple competence, which constitutes a form of transversality” (Rey, 2002, p. 52, our translation).

In the same sense, specialized and fragmented scientific knowledge makes the “scientist a specialized ignoramus” (Fazenda, 2008, p. 67, our translation). The Cartesian conception imposed analytical reasoning that stimulates the development of scientific thinking, but also generated compartmentalized and reductionist disciplinary teaching.

Transdisciplinary knowledge, with the move towards interdisciplinary, does not rule out the moment of experiencing specialized knowledge that must be exercised in technical education (Morin, 2015). “It is the tendency towards reduction that deprives us of understanding: between peoples, between nations, between religions. It is what causes misunderstanding to reign within us, in the city, in relationships between couples, between parents and children.” (*idem*, p. 135, our translation) It appears that educational institutions must maintain the focus on training that acts on the development of skills and abilities that allow graduates to mobilize them in professional situations that are unpredictable at the time of training.

Rey (2002) points out as one of the characteristics of transversality the ability to transfer skills and abilities developed during training. Along the same lines, Fazenda (2008) states that students need to be invited to think, reflect on other possibilities, review concepts and conceptions with a multifaceted perspective.

The knowledge arising from an interdisciplinary reflection refers to the analysis articulated with the most diverse contents already worked on in a given curricular matrix. This type of analysis tends to require the refinement of the student's skills and abilities, who need to

see beyond the fragmented boxes in the curricular subjects. Interdisciplinary practice represents the overcoming of fragmented study through the knowledge transmitted in the disciplines in which the teacher works in a specialized way, tending to forget the dialogue with others and the reflection of theory in the practice of social experience.

Interdisciplinary practice presupposes a deconstruction, a break with the traditional and with the daily school work routine. The interdisciplinary teacher travels through the flexible border regions where the 'self' coexists with the 'other' without giving up its characteristics, enabling interdependence, sharing, encounter, dialogue and transformations. This is the movement of interdisciplinarity characterized by attitudes towards knowledge (Fazenda, 2008, p. 82, our translation).

It can be seen, in this line of reasoning, that the educational institution that encourages interdisciplinary action faces two challenges: that of encouraging the teacher to go beyond the transmission of specialized knowledge and that of awakening in the student the impetus for research and participation in classroom and outside of it (as Alternância suggests), in order to stimulate the critical and transformative knowledge inherent to interdisciplinary analysis. About hope in education, in *Liquid Life*:

The purpose of education in these cases is to contest the impact of everyday experiences, confront them and ultimately challenge the pressures that arise from the social environment. But are education and educators up to this task? Will they be able to withstand the pressure? Will they be able to avoid being regimented by the same pressures they should face? This question has been asked forever and repeatedly answered in the negative by the realities of social life. And yet it resurfaces, equally strong, after each succeeding calamity. The hopes of using education as a lever with enough force to destabilize and ultimately dislodge the pressures of “social facts” seem as immortal as they are vulnerable [...] In any case, hope is alive and well (Bauman, 2007b, p. 21, our translation).

Giroux's <sup>11</sup> influence also marks the author's reflection on the topic.

Interdisciplinary action represents the opening for dialogue between teachers, between students and between these and those. It means reflecting theory and practice permeating new approaches, since it is an exchange of knowledge that involves the complexity of different perspectives.

This issue is widely debated by Freire in *Pedagogy of Autonomy* (Freire, 1996) and constitutes one of the basic assumptions of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 2011): respect

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<sup>11</sup>In this interview it is possible to learn about the thinking of the American Henry Giroux, for whom Bauman has enormous appreciation: (Guilherme, 2006).

for students' knowledge. The thematization of knowledge - of experiences carried out and their methodical systematization within schools - opens up possibilities of overcoming the historical gap occurring in the Brazilian educational system, which divorced technical education from training for citizenship. The Brazilian school caged the diverse knowledge in curricular pigeonholes and gave the teaching staff a little piece for each specialist to take care of, in correlation with what the elephant seemed to be to each of the blind people who touched it.

Respecting “common sense” knowledge or knowledge produced in existential experience is not limiting the educational act to this knowledge, but dialoguing with it, problematizing it with a view to developing relational knowledge, as an articulating synthesis between the knowledge learned at school of life as proclaimed in school life. Thus, respect for this knowledge is part of a broader field in which they are produced, that is, in the field of the cultural context that is incapable of being “read” competently if the cultural identity of the students is diluted and the issue of class is ignored, an element that is difficult to capture in some contexts due to the contemporary complexification of the social fabric (Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2010, p. 367-368, our translation).

It is necessary to “incite doubt and stimulate the imagination, thereby challenging the prevailing consensus” (Bauman, 2007b, p. 22, our translation). It is essential to “stir up the kids” and instigate “doubts in students about the images they have of themselves and the society to which they belong.”

It is possible that liquid modernity will lead to the heights of progress in certain technological domains, and leave it crawling in others, or throw it into a precipice or hell. Those restless young people in Bresson's film, who came together to find meaning in their lives, at the end of their search found nothing but a refrigerator full of things and no adults around to help them reflect on their anguish and uncertainties. They are part of the “young generation that was born today, so that it knows no other, it is a society of consumers and an “just-in-time” culture – restless and in perpetual change – that promotes the cult of novelty and random contingency” (Bauman, 2013, p. 34, our translation). It further argues that

[...] the young people of the generation that is now entering the job market have been [...] trained to believe that their task in life is to surpass [...] their parents. [...] Nothing prepared them for the arrival of the new inflexible, inhospitable and unattractive world, the degraded world of values, the devaluation of obtained merits, closed doors, the volatility of jobs and the obstinacy of unemployment; the transience of expectations and the durability of defeats; a new world of stillborn projects and dashed hopes, and of opportunities more notable for their absence (op. cit., p. 45, our translation).

They represent the oppressed of the liquid-modern era. The oppressor is no longer the *landowner* which personally oppresses its servants or slaves, but the market is present *urbi et orbe*, which acts in an overwhelming way in transforming/reducing people into consumers, enemies of citizenship. There are still no elements to assess the real dimension of the depersonalization that the market exerts on people by reducing them to the condition of mere consumers. It is possible that the degree of alienation in liquid modern society is surprisingly greater than the alienation studied by Marx, produced by the classical capitalist system.

For now, it is possible to verify, empirically, that reducing people to the condition of oppressed consumers frustrates them and turns some into submissive consumers and others into non-consumers, relegated to the social trash, excluded from both material goods and social coexistence. Just check how security guards act on the doorsteps of large shopping malls when groups of excluded young people try to enter these sumptuous temples of consumption.

No less oppressed are those who accept “putting themselves up for sale” and are willing to “control themselves” to make exploitation less expensive, freeing their bosses from having to repress their idiosyncrasies. To be different from others, they need to pretend that they are equal to themselves, and make the pretended difference the symbolic bargaining capital with those who establish the rules of domination.

### Final remarks

Liquid modernity has created immense possibilities for connectivity between people/consumers and pushes them into the desert of loneliness. It has accelerated a world of greater tolerance, freedom of choice, respect for diversity, but, at the same time, it has exasperated prejudices and legitimized practices of violence against those who are different, especially if they profess religious beliefs or worship beliefs that lead to “strange” behavior.

It is urgent that parents and educators wake up from the long political sleep in which they have found themselves since the old days of solid society and realize the challenges posed by liquid society. Bauman did not set out to develop a theory about education in the liquid-modern era, but he sheds light on paths through which we can advance in reconstructing the foundations for another possible education. It is possible, however, to smell, from a distance, that he formulates elements of a “pedagogy of the oppressed in the liquid modern era”, something yet to be designed. “We need lifelong education to have choices. But we need it even



more to preserve the conditions that make this choice possible and within our reach.” (Bauman, 2007a, p. 167, our translation)

It is surprising that, being an attentive everyday sociologist, he did not allude to Paulo Freire, who with *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 2011) became the most read author on education in the world. Likewise, it failed to do so with the *Pedagogy of Alternation* (Gimonet, 2007), present on five continents and adopted in more than a thousand educational units in rural areas. Formally, it is adopted to solve needs in rural areas, but, over time, it has revealed the potential to also be used in many urban higher education institutions<sup>12</sup>. Curiosity increases when we see that, without formally knowing both pedagogies, Bauman formulates statements about the challenges of future education that are very similar to Freirian and alternative foundations. It is exciting to imagine the possibility of a confluence between these three currents of pedagogical thought, something like a meeting of waters, three tributaries running in the same direction and, in continuity, mixing, thus forming a new and robust educational paradigm<sup>13</sup>.

Are educators prepared to undertake this innovative and revolutionary task, asks Bauman? When formulating the question, he implies his pessimism about this.

This is the social context in which educators are currently forced to work. Their responses and the effectiveness of the strategies used to promote such responses are destined to remain a crucial object of study in pedagogical sciences for a long time (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 4, our translation).

One and another, educators, parents, students and children, philosophers and education bureaucrats need to understand that “the art of living in a world saturated with information must still be learned, as well as the even more difficult art of educating the human being in this new way of living” (Porcheddu, 2009, p. 3, our translation).

We resort, once again, to the third thesis of Marx and Engels (1977, p. 119, our translation), about Feuerbach, which indicates, with certainty, how those who wish to change their life circumstances should be guided. “The coincidence of the modification of circumstances and human activity can only be grasped and rationally understood as a

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<sup>12</sup>On the website of the International Association of Family Movements for Rural Formation ([www.aimfr.org](http://www.aimfr.org)), you can find information about Alternation and the places where it was applied.

<sup>13</sup>The confluence between Freirean and Alternation Pedagogy was proposed at the VIII International Meeting of the Paulo Freire Forum, in Los Angeles, held from September 19 to 21, 2012. At that time, the conceptual kinship between Bauman, Freire and the alternation pedagogues (Pineau and Gionet), which is why only the confluence of the first two was proposed. The full text of the communication is a chapter of the book *Doing education, doing politics* (Manfio; Manfio, 2014).

transformative practice”. From contemplation to action, orders Marx. Freire (2000, p. 67, our translation) insists, “if education alone does not transform society, without it neither does society change.” And Bauman (2013, p. 31, our translation) adds:

Although the powers of the current educational system seem limited, and it itself is increasingly subjected to the consumerist game, it still has enough transformative powers to be considered one of the promising factors for this revolution, the cultural revolution.

Practices inspired by these new sources occur in myriads of places led by multitudes of actors who may be unaware of the actions that contribute to preserving the conditions that make possible the choices aimed at a more hospitable (Bauman), connective (Freire), copulative world (Pineau), which enables good living (Morin). It is in this sense that we believe that Bauman can contribute to education and inspire possibilities of connection with authors in the field in the search for alternatives to the dilemmas posed.

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