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CARE AND NEW MANAGERIALISM: WHERE DOES THE FEMALE TEACHER'S WORK GO?¹

MARÍLIA PINTO DE CARVALHO^{1*}

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1029-4084>

CINTHIA TORRES TOLEDO^{1**}

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0238-7937>

IVANA GONÇALVES DE OLIVEIRA^{1***}

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3526-691X>

ÂNGELA ESTEVES MODESTO^{1****}

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8874-9785>

CLÁUDIO DA SILVA NETO^{1*****}

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1968-4054>

ABSTRACT: This article presents part of the results of a study on the current gender configurations in the work of teachers in the initial years of fundamental education, which have been historically associated to femininity and practices of care. New forms of management implemented by Brazilian public administration since the end of the 1990s have put this model into question, by requiring from male and female educators alike attitudes based not only on a market logic, but also on values that are largely associated to a kind of masculinity, such as individualism, competitiveness, focus on career progress, and monetary reward. To investigate if those movements have led to the effacement of historical marks of femininity associated to the work of female teachers in the first years of education, we have conducted a qualitative study in the public school system of the state of São Paulo, which indicated the permanence of references to a femininity, albeit re-signified and contradictorily integrated to the new managerialism policies.

Keywords: Teaching. Gender. Primary school. New managerialism. Care.

¹University of São Paulo, School of Education, São Paulo, SP, Brasil.

* Senior Associate Professor at the School of Education of the University of São Paulo and co-coordinator of Edges (Grupo de Estudos de Gênero, Educação e Cultura Sexual), in which all the authors take part. E-mail: <mariliac@usp.br> .

** PhD candidate in Education under a FAPESP scholarship. E-mail: <cinthiatt@gmail.com> .

*** MA candidate in Education. E-mail: <ivana.g.oliveira@gmail.com> .

**** PhD candidate in Education and teacher of the Psychology course at the Centro Universitário das Faculdades Metropolitanas Unidas-FMU. E-mail: <angela.esteves.modesto@gmail.com> .

***** PhD candidate in Education and School Principal at the São Paulo municipal school network. E-mail: <claudioneto@usp.br> .

CUIDADO E GERENCIALISMO: PARA ONDE VAI O TRABALHO DAS PROFESSORAS

RESUMO: O artigo apresenta parte dos resultados de uma pesquisa sobre as atuais configurações de gênero no trabalho docente nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental, que foi historicamente associado a uma feminilidade e a práticas de cuidado. Contudo, as novas formas de gestão difundidas na administração pública brasileira desde o final da década de 1990, têm colocado em questão esse modelo, ao exigirem dos educadores e educadoras posturas baseadas não apenas na lógica de mercado, mas também em valores que se considera como relativos a um tipo de masculinidade, como individualismo, competitividade, foco na ascensão na carreira e em recompensas monetárias. Para investigar se esses movimentos levaram ao apagamento dos traços históricos de feminilidade associados ao trabalho das professoras dos anos iniciais, foi feito um estudo qualitativo na rede pública estadual de SP, que indicou a permanência de referências a uma feminilidade, porém ressignificadas e contraditoriamente integradas às novas políticas gerencialistas.

Palavras chave: Trabalho docente. Gênero. Anos iniciais do ensino fundamental. Gerencialismo. Cuidado.

INTRODUCTION

This article presents part of the results of a study on the current gender configurations in the teaching profession at the first years of fundamental education. Gender is taken as a category of analysis and has an important role in the construction of symbolic systems (SCOTT, 1995). The theoretical effort here is to go beyond the idea of individual gender identities and to consider two dimension of analysis: gender as a fundamental category through which meaning is attributed to everything; and gender as a way of organizing social relations (HARAWAY, 2004).

Teachers' work at the first years of fundamental education has been historically associated to care and to femininity, that is, to characteristics socially associated to women, such as dedication, valuation of non-monetary rewards, and emotional attachment. In this context, we define care as practices of integral and individualized attention to pupils (CARVALHO, 1999).

During the last decades, however, this working model has been questioned by new forms of management based on the notions of quality, efficiency, assessment and accountability. The "new public management", also called "new managerialism", arrives at schools as the single solution capable of leading to quality education (HYPOLITO, VIEIRA, LEITE, 2012) and educational policy is subjected to economy,

not only with regards to financing, but through the very understanding of how the state should function (SOUZA, 2016; DALE, 1989). It is a management focused on measurable results, which implies identifying quality of education with good results of students in standardized, large-scale assessments, in other words, the quality of education is now defined on the basis of criteria of efficiency and productivity, within a clear corporate framework (FREITAS, 2014).

From the viewpoint of control and organization of work, new managerialism is associated to management models that have taken root with contemporary capitalism under the production restructuring of the last decades of the 20th century, characterized by flexibilization, the rise in job insecurity, working intensification, the emphasis on results, the expansion of individualism and competitiveness among workers, as well as the use of techniques of involvement and participation of workers in the company's plans (ANTUNES, 2008; ALVES, 2011). Apart from that, it is also a characteristic of this period of contemporary capitalism the expansion of commercial relations into spheres of life that hitherto had been untouched by these processes, such as care and close relationships, which now become part of the market, or at least obey its logic and values (MORINI, 2008; EVANGELISTA; VALETIN, 2013). The introduction of mercantile logic in the classrooms of public schools can be understood as part of this expansion.

New managerialism requires from educators attitudes focused on efficiency and accountability to “consumers”, reinforcing a subjectivity that involves individualized, competitive, planned actions aimed at career progress and monetary reward. These principles are grounded not only in the logic of the market, but also in values that are seen as related to masculinity – or to a form of masculinity (MAHONY, HEXTALL, MENTER, 2004; CHAN, 2011; GARCIA, ANADON, 2009). To some authors, this markedly masculine orientation tends to marginalize femininity, which until now has set the tone for the teaching of children (BLACKMORE, SACHS, 2007; CHAN, 2011), bringing with it new challenges both for men and for women in the construction of their teaching practice.

In an analytically reverse sense, studies on the expansion of aspects traditionally associated to the work of women to the larger group of workers discuss the feminization² of work in our era (MORINI, 2008; ABÍLIO, 2014), signifying the expansion both of characteristics typical of domestic labor and of those associated to predominantly feminine paid occupations. The growing presence

of unpaid work, with the erasing of differences between worktime and free time, and also between workplace and home, which create a situation of full availability of the worker, mixes work and leisure and generates certain invisibility of the work, which are all features of domestic labor, historically carried out by women, but which today are central to labor in general. Besides, job insecurity, versatility, informality, low payment levels and high turnover rates, characteristics of majorly feminine paid occupations, are now constitutive elements of everybody's labor. Thus, this feminization process has the meaning of establishing a "new old relation", in the words of Ludmila Abílio (2014, p. 86), to the extent that the more precarious and degraded forms of work are now updated and constitute links in the internationalized production chain of global economy.

In the case of teachers from the first years of fundamental education, in a country in which precariousness and informality are constitutive of the labor market for men and women, part of the old characteristics marks the very origin of the occupation of teaching in public schools, during the first decades of the 20th century: versatility, presence of unpaid, invisible work, lack of distinction between worktime and free time. Another part is present in its exercise since the 1970s: precariousness, low payment, high staff turnover. It remains to be investigated the form in which these characteristics are transformed and updated with the introduction of the mercantile logic in public schools, with the consequent expansion and automation of control mechanisms, self-intensification, and the pressure for results. Will these movements have led to the erasure of the traces of femininity that used to mark the dedicated teacher that cares for her students and loves to teach?

With that purpose a qualitative study was conducted, which is more conducive to capturing meanings and processes (SARMENTO, 2011), with the use of observations and semistructured interviews (ZAGO, 2011). The São Paulo state school system was chosen for its national representativeness and for the presence of a management policy for teachers' work based on the standardized assessment of learning, with the establishment of goals and the payment of annual bonuses. Seeking the highest possible diversity regarding sex, age, and experience, nine female teachers, two male teachers, and a pedagogical coordinator were interviewed, all working at the initial years of fundamental education in nine schools located in different areas of the city of São Paulo or in municipalities of its metropolitan area. Eight of those teachers had their classes observed during one of two sessions.³

The current basic education school system of São Paulo comprises 5300 schools in which 4,300,000 students are enrolled, and 148,738 teachers work. From these, 29,662 (19.94%) are responsible for classes in the first years of fundamental education, according to the School Census (INEP, 2018). Governed since 1995 by the same political party (PSDB), the state of São Paulo has seen certain continuity in educational policies, based on proposals to reduce costs and improve efficiency through the use of computers, and on an administrative reform grounded in the principles of new managerialism. These policies can be understood through two complementary lines of action: on the one hand, the implementation of a procedure of assessment of students' performance through standardized tests (SARESP) and the creation in 2007 of a state-wide index (IDESP) which, apart from the results in the test, also considers the flow of students; on the other hand, the rewarding of educators based either on the results of those tests and in the fulfilment of goals (result-based bonuses) or based on the assessment of teachers for their career progress (merit examination) (CASSETARI, 2010; ZATTI, 2017). Apart from the exams of the Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB) organized by the Ministry for Education (MEC) and of the São Paulo State School Performance Assessment System (SARESP), students from the São Paulo state school system located in the capital became in 2017 part of a program based on the Results Improvement Method (MMR) with bimonthly assessments named Assessment of Learning in Process (AAP).

In the initial years of fundamental education, state-wide tests are based on the "Read and Write" and EMAI ("Mathematical Teaching in the Initial Years") programs, which comprise Portuguese and Mathematics curricula, respectively; courses and other continued education activities for teachers and managers; detailed guiding materials for the classroom and materials for the pupils. Programs are permanently followed up by staff from the Secretariat, and teachers' books contain detailed indications of how each activity is to be developed (LIMA, 2014; RIGOLON, 2013).

A FEMININE WORK MODEL

Several analysts and even supporters of these management policies within the São Paulo state school system recognize that they have been implemented in a top-down model, that is, as an imposition from the higher administration (JUNQUEIRA, n.d.; CASSETARI,

2010; ZATTI, 2017). In the initial years of fundamental education, they were imposed to teachers who historically shared a work model based on characteristics seen as feminine.

Female teachers have been the majority at this level of teaching since the beginning of the 20th century, when the Brazilian public school system was constituted and historically unfolded into the current years of fundamental education. In São Paulo, female teachers already represented “70% of the total number of staff in charge of teaching” in 1921, according to Lourenço Filho (REIS, 1991, p. 72). Luís Pereira, based on data from MEC and IBGE, indicates that women were 93.3% of the “primary teaching in the São Paulo state school system” in 1961 (PEREIRA, 1969, p. 31). And in 2017 they represented 91.8%, according to the School Census (INEP, 2018).

But it is not just about a numerical presence. Femininity characteristics have been persistently associated to the work of teaching children. For example, 92.5% of primary school teachers that responded Luís Pereira’s questionnaire in 1959⁴ stated that the profession was more adequate to women and justified it saying that: “it is easier for the woman to turn the school into a second home. There are countless students that miss this in a male teacher’s class”; “in my opinion, the woman is by nature and instinct more linked to the child” (PEREIRA, 1969, p. 49).

In 1996, studying teachers from the initial years of fundamental education in the São Paulo state school system, one of us found out an ideal of teacher based on the practices of care, understood as integral and individualized attention to every aspect of the development of children, and not just to its cognitive dimension. In the words of a young teacher, then 21 years old: “I think that the teacher, he does not have to pass only contents, because sometimes you are talking to a pupil, you talk with the father or mother, and you find a way” (CARVALHO, 1999). This component of the work of teachers, which resulted in an emotional attachment to children, and in extra-classroom work, but also in pleasure and accomplishment, did not have a name, nor was it made explicit or openly discussed. The only possible references to encompass the care, the available vocabulary, were femininity and maternity, with which their pedagogical practices were intensely correlated. In fact, school teaching for children and maternity were referred to one and the same cultural matrix, itself also historically constructed.

Ten years later, Alda Judith Alves-Mazzotti (2007) studied teachers from public schools of fundamental education in Rio de Janeiro and identified the term “dedication” as the core of the

representation about being a teacher among those associated to the first years of education. Although the author does not draw this relation, we can say that the term is articulated with an idea of femininity, just like other associations made by those teachers, including vocation, mission and abnegation.

The interviews conducted in 2017 bring indications that this tradition of relating the teaching profession at the initial years of fundamental education to characteristics socially attributed to femininity did not remain unchanged in our days, but is still very much present, and is being re-signified in the context of the new forms of management of the teaching work.

THE CARING TEACHER: “MOTHER HEN AND HER CHICKS”

The interview given by a teacher named Ester constituted a landmark in the construction of this reflection. White,⁵ 46 years old, Ester had 28 years of experience, always at the same school. She graduated from her Teaching course in 1989, and at the age of 18 she was already teaching; in 2000 she took a distance course in Pedagogy under an agreement established between the São Paulo State Secretariat for Education and the University of São Paulo. Married to a businessman, with a single daughter aged 20, Ester declared that her income as a teacher served mainly to pay for the daughter’s higher education plus “some part of the credit card bill”.

In reality, after I got married I never had to maintain the household, with all expenses and everything. We know that if you have to keep a household with the salary that we have now it is impossible, isn’t it? So, it would have to be something like a supplement. (Ester)

She declared having chosen to be a teacher because at that time it was “every girls’ dream”, and she described her relationship with the students as that of a “mother hen, really. I always tell them that they are like the chicks, and I put them under my wing (laughs).” Ester had already been invited to take on the post of pedagogical coordinator and a position in the teaching directorship, but she refused “because teaching classes you see the pupil progressing, you see the accomplishment at the end of the year; and that I will not trade for anything, I do not give it up.” It is a narrative quite similar to those collected from teachers in studies conducted decades ago (PEREIRA, 1969; BRUSCHINI; AMADO, 1988), which also mentioned the vocation to be a teacher, the dedication to children and the sense of accomplishment of seeing their progress.

Ester's testimonies made clear the marks of femininity and the reference to maternity in order to describe her practice:

[The good teacher] firstly he has to love, firstly he has to love the pupils. [...] Since my first years I always worked very much with my heart in what I do. After I had my daughter, it became even more present, because I saw the pupils as if they were my children, and I always thought: I want to give all I can to them, because it was as if it was my daughter that was sitting there at those benches. (Ester)

In some respects, her words recall the testimonies collected by Pereira (1969), in which one reads that women “had more of a knack” for children from the then called primary school, because “for a male teacher it becomes more difficult, this tender acceptance of the little ones” (p. 59). However, ideas linked to professionalism are present and articulated to the maternal sphere, since Ester put the dedication to pupils as the source of the professional attitudes she valued, such as preparing classes and having well-defined objectives. She did not oppose maternity and professionalism, and recognized the importance of a pedagogical formation:

You have to know: why did you choose this profession? We know it's not for the money; so, you chose it because you have a perspective, because you want to make a difference. You chose it as an odd job, for necessity, or because you had an ideal to be fulfilled, to be accomplished? The second step is you knowing where you want to go with your students. You prepare your classes to reach the objectives you set; because no one gets anywhere if they don't know where they want to go, isn't it? (Ester).

The teacher also declared that she always took work home, “at least an hour and a half per day to prepare classes”, and that she spent her own money to offer activities to the students: “Sometimes I photocopy homework, I print things at home from my own pocket.” (Ester).

With no need for financial bonuses – not even the salary was essential –, working for idealism and love, with what she loved, Ester had everything to stay away from the standardized tests and attainment of goals, if the motive was strictly financial. However, she demonstrated to be one of the best-informed interviewees about the bonus policy and its calculations, the goals for her school and for the state etc.

For 2016 the result is already out, our school had to reach 7.7. [...] [The state] wants to reach a target of 6 by 2030 [statewide average] and we were already at 7.6. But we had two 5th year classes, and not just one; so, we had a few problems. Even so, we reached 6.1! 6.1 is still above many schools, but we did not reach the target. So, there are schools, for example, that reached a target of 3.5 and receive the bonus, whereas we are at 6.1 and will receive nothing. (Ester)

The teacher also mentioned being favorable to external assessment and to the changes brought about by the system of goals:

Because you have to reach the goal and then, whether you want it or not, there's more expectation, isn't it and then, whether you want it or not, a person, even the most settled one, will have to be bothered to do something. So, I see it positively, you know, I see this assessment positively. (Ester)

When talking about her work, she threw light on the issue of the presence of result-based management in her classroom practice. Because the classes which Ester taught in general went well in the tests, the principal pressured her to take on fifth year classes, since they were the ones who took the SARESP (São Paulo State School Performance Assessment System). She did not like it: "it's too much pressure", she said. That year she was happy to have gone back to teaching fourth year classes, not so much because she was then able to direct her work towards objectives other than the test, but because she could then have "two years to prepare them for the SARESP".

At the same time, Ester was happy with the degree of autonomy she had, and she liked the curriculum and materials given by the Secretary for education (*Ler e Escrever* [Reading and Writing] and EMAI – *Ensino de Matemática nos Anos Iniciais* [Mathematics Teaching for the Initial Years]).

We have the curriculum we have to follow, which is a parameter for the whole State, but that, I think, is even good, viable, because [...] When we receive a student from our State, that comes with this curriculum, what he or she is learning at school, will be given continuity here. Now, the way I'll develop this curriculum, the way I'll present it to my pupil... The way you're going to work with your pupils, that is a choice of the teacher. (Ester)

This idea of autonomy is very distant, for example, from that observed in the late 1990s among teachers of the first years, who were quite free to define objectives, contents, methodology, the pace of work, and the forms of evaluation of learning. For those teachers, the model of a vocationed, affective teacher corresponded to a high degree of autonomy and control over her own work. (CARVALHO, 1999)

Ester, therefore, personifies an ideal worker from the viewpoint of the new public management: simultaneously sympathetic to the tests and targets, and satisfied with the situation of carrying out a teaching defined externally, she maintains definite features of the old primary teacher, socially identified to femininity, which make her a dedicated teacher, who works at home without payment, spends her own resources to supplement what the State does not supply, and justifies her attitudes as consequences of her concern with the children.

OTHER OUTLOOKS: “I’M NOT THE STUDENT’S MOTHER, I’M NOT THE STUDENT’S AUNT, I AM NOT THE STUDENT’S GODMOTHER”

But, would that profile be an exception? Ester’s testimony contained two extremes: on the one hand, she resorted explicitly to references to maternity to describe her work; on the other hand, she declared being favorable to the standardized curriculum, to large-scale assessments and to the targets. Unlike her, some of the interviewees were, to varying degrees, critical of standardization and of the corresponding forms of control, although they all worked under those parameters.

Also, the explicitly maternal discourse was not the rule among the interviewees, and was present only in the arguments of Zuleica, brown, 46 years old just like Ester but, unlike her, coming from a low-income family and, at the time of interview, the sole responsible for the sustenance of her family.

Our colleagues of the sixth year will not have the same amount of time as the PEB I [initial years of fundamental education] teacher, we sometimes find ourselves being like big mothers [...] I think the challenge is more in the affective life of the child, which interferes in the cognitive, whether you want it or not. But that’s our role, that’s the challenge, to seek ways of helping them. [...] a big mother, she has to be strict at the right time, but most of her life she has to have a more tender look, even to the child’s tantrums. The teacher is no different, because you see the student coming to your desk, he calls you father, mother, grandma. [...] If he sees you with this image, it is because he seeks in you something more than you just teaching him to read and write. So, we have to have this mother’s outlook. (Zuleica)

As in Ester’s case, this attitude did not prevent Zuleica from adopting the goal-based work and standardized tests, which she thought were of great help.

Previously, we had to take clippings from the SARESP to work with abilities, to see students’ competences and prepare them for the SARESP. Now, this AAP, which is the Process Learning Assessment, came to help us, because it already makes an assessment, works with everything that will be required later at the SARESP [...] It’s very good to guide the work of the teacher, to see all the progress. We would find out only at the SARESP, at the end of it, the following year, when the feedback came. [...] So, I think it is very good. (Zuleica)

At the other extreme of the testimonies, we have arguments against the maternal model, explicit in the case of Cynthia, 38-year-old, white, divorced, no children (“by choice”):

The person who has to embrace is the mother, the person who has to take care is the mother, you are a teacher, you teach the letters, you teach them knowledge. You

offer, you take information and transform it into knowledge to prepare them for life and for the labor market. Tenderness, affection, you have towards them because it's a human being, but it is the family that is supposed to give them that, the teacher is no substitute. [...] Because I lead my life like this, my private life from the door out. I am a teacher from the door in, between 7:00 and 11:30 I am a teacher, that is my profession, I studied for that. I worked at a school that belonged to a Frenchman, and once he was very direct with me, he said: "what have you studied for?", "to be a teacher", "then be a teacher, that is what you are". So, I am not the student's mother, I'm not the student's aunt, I'm not the student's godmother. (Cynthia)

The testimony of Renata, 26-year-old, black, married, at the time expecting her first child, goes along the same lines. Although she didn't criticize explicitly the maternity-based model, she valued the kind of attitude displayed by her school's principal when allowing the teachers to concentrate on the transfer of content, differently from the teacher that understands caring as part of her work, paying attention to all aspects of her students' development:

The teacher there [at school] is seen really as authority, you are a teacher. When there is a problem with discipline, you don't even know what it's happening, you just refer it to the principal, they sort it out. Parents never come to the teacher, the school never allow it, you are only taken from the classroom if it's really necessary. [...], **the teacher is the pedagogical**, you are there **to work**, to take care of the pedagogical learning; indiscipline, this kind of things, this is all management, the principal office takes care of it. (Renata, emphasis in her speech)

Between one extreme and the other, the other interviewees can be located in a continuum whose testimonies, although not referring to maternity, included in various degrees the elements of the care-based model of teaching, that is to say, of the individualized attention to the integral development of the child. Celina, for example, the youngest teacher we interviewed (23 years old), expressed herself in the following terms:

I try to give them the attention, the caring they need, because sometimes **they miss it very much**. [...] there are some of them that we see that they lack **attention, caring**. And sometimes this is the only attention they get, here with us. [...] When we are doing some activity that is more difficult for them, I take a chair and sit beside them, I explain, I talk. Then, sometimes you go into private issues of the pupil, also, because they end up telling you, opening themselves. (Celina, our emphasis)

The sentence highlighted above brings almost the same words as those of the teacher cited by Pereira (1969), mentioning that pupils lack caring and attention. Marlucy (28 years old), in her turn, spoke about affection in reversal, blaming herself for not being able to

offer the children what she thought was adequate. Even not knowing Celina, Marlucy used very similar arguments, revealing how much they are part of a prevailing school culture:

It's not so much that I do not relate well to these children, but I have difficulties giving affection; then, I stay more, like, in the learning part; the affection itself I kind of block out, you know? [...] And I think you have to have something that I don't really have, which is impartiality, managing to be affective with any pupil independently of their behavior. Because, in fact, these things you see on the Internet: that sometimes **your pupil, the only place he has to be heard, to have attention is the school**. It is true. If you are there you know it: there are children who give the impression that they don't really have that kind of thing at home. And not being able to give it to some pupils, it bothers me. I think the ideal teacher would have to have this kind of emotional intelligence to be able to supply this part of the affection too. (Marlucy, our emphasis)

Explicit reference to maternal elements were therefore not present in the majority of testimonies, but there were references culturally associated to femininity that were approached in a manner consistent with the major changes in the patterns of gender relations that took place in Brazilian society since the study by Pereira (1969). Besides, comparing the current interviews with older testimonies, current elements linked to specific pedagogical knowledge are evident, which we can relate to a discourse of professionalization of teaching, current in the Brazilian educational field since at least the 1980s (SCHERER; DAL'IGNA, 2017). However, even if the teachers we interviewed did not speak much of maternal instincts and natural gifts, even if many did not make explicit appeal to being “a second mother”, they alluded to the need to give affection and attention, to “emotional intelligence”, to the development of pupils beyond cognitive aspects. And even Renata and Cynthia, who declared to be against the association between teacher and mother, revealed in their observed practices, apart from systematic exchanges of affection with pupils, whom they knew closely, also attention to extra-cognitive aspects of their development. Renata commented about her own expenses with pedagogical material, and even with small gifts to children, revealing the many layers of her understanding of what it means to be a teacher “focused on the pedagogical”:

There are always things that you get out of your pocket to do in the classroom. Apart from the small treats that you end up wanting to give them. If you want to do it, you have to give it. Like, during Easter, you want to give them a little something, then you buy it out of your pocket; Children's Day, you have to give them something, so you end up buying out of your pocket. (Renata)

Thus, beyond the explicit reference to maternal elements, other elements of the model of the dedicated teacher were constantly present in speeches and practices. The gratifying dimension of the work was found in all interviewees – both male and female. And it always led to valuing non-monetary forms of compensation. All teachers declared loving to give classes, that it was a work in which they saw results, in which they could make a difference and look towards the future, a captivating work, in which they were happy.⁶

Let us now see other aspects of the so-called feminization of the labor.

MIXTURES: “THERE ARE ALWAYS THINGS THAT YOU GET OUT OF YOUR POCKET”

The fact that the teacher takes work home is almost taken for granted, recognized by the common sense and incorporated to the definition of work shift, based on the labor demands of the category. For the State of São Paulo, the current weekly work shift of 30 hours includes 10 classes 50 minutes long each (about 8 hours) of pedagogical work to be carried out in any location, apart from three hours-class to be carried out at the school.

All our interviewees declared working at home, although the period declared varied between three and eight hours a week. Apart from preparing classes and grading exercises and exams, activities such as looking for materials, news and information, searching contents and attending courses were conducted during their free time, on weekends and vacations.

In addition to that, the obligations introduced by the new form of school management have increased this period of work at home, and have diversified the tasks, either because of the bureaucratic demands, with a large number of plans, spreadsheets and reports to fill and deliver, or by the obligation to attend courses, such as the one that is required of any teacher who has been approved in public admission exams. The EMAI program also presupposes the participation, seen as voluntary, of teachers in weekly formation meetings at school, which are called collaborative groups and are not included in the pedagogical time paid by the state.

The material requires a lot of study. The EMAI works with a collaborative group where we, the teachers that want to take part of this collaborative group, we arrive earlier for work at school, we sit down together and study. [...] The teacher's book doesn't have answers, it has loads of instructions, if you take the pupil's book and just apply it, it doesn't work. So, you have to study. (Cecília)

In practical terms, work time and leisure time for teachers have been historically superposed and mixed, and the new forms of management have taken advantage of this feminine tradition of the category to advance towards the total flexibilization of labor. The case of teacher Zuleica is emblematic, not just with respect to availability of time, but also to versatility and precariousness. She described herself as a “multiuse” teacher, referring to her triple school work shift, since she arrived daily at the school where the interview was conducted at 7 AM and stayed until 11:45 “at the ready”, that is, ready to substitute for any teacher that missed a day’s work. At 12:30 she entered the classroom at a different school, where she was responsible for a class and, in the evening, she went back to the first school to substitute for teachers of the second stage of fundamental education.

I come on the off-chance, because it’s easier, isn’t it? I can’t always phone beforehand to know, so I prefer to come. I bring some activities with me, and if someone misses the day’s work I’m ready, because I like to prepare the class too, any year I teach, I think we are here to work and to give our best. [...] But, for example, if an English teacher is missing, of course I’ll not teach English, because I don’t have command of the class subject, but I try to teach something near and that you can... because, without false modesty, I’ve always been complimented for my classes. (Zuleica)

If no colleague was absent, it was “a day dismissed”: Zuleica remained at the school’s disposal but received no payment. This is precariousness, versatility and total availability that were not created by the new management of the school system, but that are completely functional in it and thrive alongside the proclaimed modernity and the technical apparatus mobilized by it.

Apart from the use of time, working at home meant using their own equipment, and therefore material expenses for the teachers, expenses that go unaccounted, but which are indispensable for the functioning of official programs such as the *Ler e Escrever* [Read and Write] and the EMAI. These contributions are in practice presupposed in the management plans which, also in this case, make use of a preexisting tradition.

I’ve already brought EVA sheets, cardboard, card paper, ink. Sometimes the school has it, but when they don’t have it, I end up bringing it out of my pocket. (Celina)

The EMAI says: You have to give them homework. I give my pupils homework. Who does it? I do. Who prints it? I do it, I buy the paper, I buy the ink. (Cecilia)

Teachers, using their free time and their personal relations, found ways of acquiring the materials the school failed to supply:

We have a newspaper project in the [*Ler e Escrever* program] book. But the government doesn't send newspapers to the students, we have to go after newspapers. And newspaper is expensive, we know. And you have to have complete newspapers. [...] Look, I go around collecting them, I tell my mother: "Mom, if you have newspaper, save it for me". My sister works at an estate agent, and her boss reads a lot of newspaper, then she brings me quite a bit; then I keep them, I collect them, and then I do the project with the pupils. (Renata)

I had a first year class in 2015, and we had [in the EMAI notebook] games with bottle caps, so I collected bottle caps for the whole weekend. I don't have just a bag, I have a huge box full of bottle caps. We always think: Oh, I'll manage. (Manoela)

Even informatization, one of the mainstays of the efficiency intended by the Secretariat for Education, relies on the work developed at home and on the teachers' own resources, despite the digital systems and processes being presented as state-of-the-art:

This weekend I have to put grades into the system, what they call STED, Digital School System, I have to input the grades myself. [...] And at school it's very difficult to do this, there are not enough computers, and too many teachers. (Marlucy)

NEW OLD WORKING CONDITIONS: "DOUBLE SHIFTS", "MERGE CLASSES"

As to the working conditions, the complaints are widespread among the interviewees regarding the lack of resources, such as computers, computer rooms, overhead projectors, video rooms, library, didactic materials and games, apart from the large number of pupils in each class and the difficulties in effectively including pupils with special needs. If this precariousness of working conditions is no news, it is worth emphasizing how much the arguments in favor of accepting them for the good of the children are still present, as teacher Zuleica tells us:

Last year, for example, the teacher that was going to take that class had many health problems and was nearly retiring, and students stayed without classes for a long time; then I took two classes, which meant almost 50 students, or even more, isn't it? There are photographs there. The colleagues [...] wanted to kill me, because they walked by and saw the class full: "You can't do that, because it's them who must send someone". But they forget that child that was there, many of them coming by bus, and the parents had no way of keeping them at home, they were already counting on it, the brother was in the 6th year, or in the 7th, or the 8th, and he had to stay here, poor thing, until 11:00, 11:30, which was his time to leave. And I was in my classroom, with my pupils. Then I looked and said: No, if I'm taking one, why not take all of them? (Zuleica)

Pressured to guarantee the targets with full classes, in ill-equipped schools, without materials or assistants, teachers found

their own ways, and dug into their own resources and free time, overstretching themselves to cater for the pupils' needs, reproducing and actualizing the model of the dedicated and altruistic teacher within the context of a management that spoke of efficiency, results and professionalism, and which makes teachers accountable for the performance of the pupils without consideration for their working conditions. On their part, teachers re-signified the flexible labor and precarization under a grammar based on dedication and care.

Another characteristic of the flexible labor present for decades in the teaching category is the precarious working situations. There are indications that working for years without having tenure was already part of the career of primary teachers in the São Paulo state school system since the 1930s (MOURA, 2013). Data offered by Pereira (1969) pointed that 13.4% of teachers responsible for classes in activity within this segment of education were not tenured in 1960, a proportion that grew significantly in the state of São Paulo (and likewise in the whole of the country) during the military dictatorship, when the policy of expansion of enrolments in basic education was put in place at the expenses of income contraction and flexibilization in the forms of hiring teachers, generating a much larger contingent of teachers hired without public exams (PIOVEZAN; DAL RI, 2016; MOURA, 2013). Already in 2017, 25.5% of the state teachers at the initial years of fundamental education were being hired temporarily, according to the 2017 School Census (INEP, 2018).

Among the teachers we interviewed, Zuleica and Claudia had worked in the state school system for 28 and 27 years, respectively, without ever having tenure, and having gone through a variety of forms of temporary contracts before acquiring stability.⁷ The vast majority of the interviewees that took on posts through public exam worked previously under precarious contracts, during periods that varied between three and 10 years; only Manuela and Cecilia started already as stable teachers, after approval in public exams.

Another old dimension of precariousness is that the low salaries push teachers to look for a second source of income. Among the primary teachers of the São Paulo state school system researched by Luís Pereira, 26% had another paid occupation, the vast majority of them as private teachers (PEREIRA, 1969). Nowadays, one of the most common forms of increasing income is to “double” or “accumulate”, that is, to work for different school systems, in different shifts, moving daily from one to the other. The double association with public service

has been allowed for teachers at the national level since 1998 but was already regulated in São Paulo since the previous year and produces working shifts of up to 60 weekly hours. (PIOVEZAN; DAL RI, 2016)

Among the 12 interviewees, only three did not have another paid employment. Cecilia taught at a private college in the evenings; Isac and Zuleica (whose situation was detailed above), apart from their classes, worked also as occasional teachers in the same state school system, substituting for colleagues in different schools, an unstable source of income, since payment is on a class given basis. And finally, Renata, Manuela, Valter, Marlucy, Claudia and Celina had other posts in the schools of the municipal school system of the capital, or of some municipality of the Metropolitan region. This meant that these teachers were responsible during the year for 60 pupils or more, depending on the size of the classes.

Despite this overload, many teachers declared avoiding to the maximum being absent from work, as Ester explained:

If I miss a class, what will those 26 little pupils be doing in the square? It is a lot of responsibility for the school. Then, we try not to miss classes, only if it's really programmed; or if you are ill, you take a license, and then there is already an occasional teacher to substitute for you. (Ester)

With such extended working shifts,⁸ the time teachers dedicate to studying, to their formation and to collective work is reduced, increasing their reliance on standardized booklets and on the action of coordinators, making more and more welcome solutions defined externally, those things that “they give you ready, you only have to apply it in the classroom”, in the words of Renata.

It is still worth highlighting the historically low participation of teachers of the first years of fundamental education in union movements and in strikes of the category, in general using as an argument their concern with the children.

Usually I do not go on strike, because I always think about my pupils, the little ones [...]; I do not go on strike thinking about the pupils, because if you look at everything that is wrong, you would have to go, wouldn't you? (Ester)

This tradition of working under precarious conditions, with temporary contracts, of not missing classes and not taking part in union activities seems rather useful for the school Administration, a tradition that in the case of teachers from the initial years is associated to a model of femininity.

THE CHOICE OF PROFESSION: "I JUST LOVE THIS"

With only a single exception, the narratives about the choice of profession follow two basic lines: the vocationed choice, which we might call classical, in which the interviewee declared that she dreamt of being a teacher since she was a child; and the discovery of the "passion for teaching" during the Pedagogy course or at the beginning of the career, after a choice motivated by convenience.

In the first case, we find six teachers with rather diversified ages and socio-economic origins.

Amanda, 51-year-old pedagogical coordinator, described thus her choice:

Oh, since I was a little girl, playing with dolls, I was already reprimanding them and teaching them. My aunt worked in that area, she worked with Inclusive Special Education. She got me quite involved in this subject; I think it was more because of her, really. (Amanda)

That narrative is similar to that of 26-year-old Renata:

I have always enjoyed teaching, you know, when I was little. So, I'm not sure if it was because of my mother [teacher], but I thought it was very beautiful. [...] I think it's like my mother used to say, it's vocation. (Renata)

On the other hand, the stories told by Valter, Isac, Claudia, Marlucy and Cecilia spoke of choices motivated by circumstantial needs and of a later discovery of the love to the profession. Valter (white, 50 years old) worked in a bank and taught history classes in state schools under temporary contracts still as a student in the Economics course. When trying a different course, he did not have "the luxury of choosing a highly competitive career", so he chose Pedagogy and declared he ended up "getting it unconsciously right". Isac (brown, 35 years old) also had other occupations before giving classes:

At the age of 18 I was a cook, I couldn't get into the Mathematics course, which I wanted [...] Then I went into the labor market... an American supermarket chain. I had to work [...] In those years I was taking the ENEM exam, I had five options to choose from, and I always chose four Mathematics and one in the area of Education. In 2008 I took the exam and got a good grade. I wanted Mathematics, my last choice was Pedagogy. And I got a full scholarship for Pedagogy. I didn't manage to do Mathematics. [...] But when I did Pedagogy I had like a transformation. Because the First Cycle is very hard, but if you enjoy working it becomes a pleasure; and I fell in love for the First Cycle. [...] Because it is a kind of work that, if you like it, it's fascinating. (Isac)

Different circumstances led Claudia (white, 51 years old) to take a teaching course:

I didn't want to be a teacher, I wanted to be an air stewardess. But we were eight children, and my mother couldn't afford me an English course or something like that. And also, Teaching was the only course I could take during the day, there was nothing else. And my father wouldn't allow me to take evening courses [...] And I wanted to go to college, my dream was going to college. So, I thought: I'm gonna take the Teaching course because it is a way of going beyond Secondary Education, of going to college. [...] Then I started as an occasional teacher, while I still studied; and when I graduated, I didn't look for anything, I didn't apply for anything, no Education Board, not even at the school; but, because the principal already knew me and because there was a spare first-year class, she came to my place: "Oh, Claudia, there is a class so and so". I said: "I'll take it". And then, in the same year I got married. My husband said: "you either take on classes or you stay at home, you're not going to work for a company". There was also that. I said: "Oh my, I can't believe it". But it was done... I applied at the time for the Bradesco Foundation, and I had passed and everything, but at the time they didn't take married women. [...] Then I was quite sad, because I wanted to go there; because I said: "Well, if I'm not going to be an air stewardess, I'm going to work for a bank, I'm not going to be a teacher under any circumstances". But, then, it happened. I got married, I was giving classes, I continued giving classes. [...] But then I started to work, and I got to like it. And now I can tell you, thanks... I thank the Lord, I love this, I just love this. (Claudia)

The exception to these two stories was presented by Cynthia,⁹ the only teacher to describe a choice influenced by the school she attended and by the pedagogical method employed therein:

I attended, I learned to read and write at a Montessori school, which is a school very different from the standard, it differs from this 18th and 19th century thing that still structures it, the Brazilian school structure is still like that. So, when you go into a Montessori school, or at least that's the impression I have, the air is different, the atmosphere is different, the reception is different, it is a more tranquil environment, children are more tranquil, there is a life philosophy really, you feel that you are useful to yourself and to the others. (Cynthia)

In summary, we found mainly professional choices very close to the tradition of the vocationed woman, amply described in the literature about teachers (BRUSCHINI; AMADO, 1988; CARVALHO, 1999), or a later encounter with the enchantment and gratification of the work, characteristics also associated to femininity, because based on feelings and on non-financial rewards.

EMOTIONAL DEMANDS: "IT'S REALLY A LOT OF GUILT THAT WE FEEL"

For most of the interviewees, this kind of relation with the career unfolded into practices full of dedication to the children, a work marked by concerns, guilt and isolation, and by many actions

that go beyond the strictly mandatory and beyond the paid working hours, as already detailed. Manoela talked to us about her efforts to cater for the individual needs of her pupils:

Last year I had a pupil with major motor coordination difficulties, he couldn't use scissors. By the end of year, he could, because I saw on the Internet, on my Saturdays, an activity that involves a disc like this [gestures], which I cut, put in the letters. [...] I even gave this material to his teacher this year, so that she could continue with this skill, developing this pinching movement. Then, I did this, I brought Goopy Putty for him, I brought modelling clay for him. (Manoela)

Speaking about her ideal of teaching, Amanda emphasized the importance of empathy, of the feelings involved in the labor of teaching:

So, I think the ideal teacher is a teacher that can see this, it's the teacher that accepts the challenge, and that can manage to see that that strange attitude the pupil has, that indiscipline, that rejection, that the fear the pupil is showing, it's only him crying "help", he's asking you for help. So, that's the ideal teacher, the teacher that can see this. (Amanda)

Marlucy spoke explicitly about her frustrations and the need for psychological support to face the emotional exigencies of teaching, lived in a solitary way:

Right now, I have a literacy class and I have a pupil that does not learn, does not move forward. I sit next to him, I do a thousand things and I end up frustrated, I can't really help. Then my therapist says: "He is one out of 25. What about the other 24?" Isn't it? "There are 10 pupils that are alphabetic, there are others almost there, in the alphabetic, and you don't see what you did for those children, you only worry about that one?" So, it's a lot, you know, what you have to... and all by yourself; usually alone. (Marlucy)

It is not common, especially within the context of the sociology of education, to pay attention to the degree of emotional exigency involved in the pedagogical work. The study by Raewyn Connell (1985) with teachers from secondary education in Australia is an exception, highlighting that teaching can be considered to be a light work from the physical point of view, but that in terms of emotional pressure it is one of the most demanding. The author describes the classroom as an absorbing, even suffocating environment, in view of the quantity of emotional flow and relationships involved therein. For her, it is not a matter of teachers' choice whether or not to get involved, but rather an inescapable dimension of the pedagogical work: "these relations **are** their work and managing them constitutes a major part of their labor process" (CONNELL, 1985, p. 117, author's emphasis).

This central element of the work of teachers has been historically disregarded, remaining invisible as part of the competencies to be individually developed by each teacher (CARVALHO, 1999). Often, in the daily school life, this emotional capacity is attributed to a femininity associated to maternity and perceived as a characteristic inherent to women, as did some of the interviewees in the present study. In academic studies, the emotional work generally appears only when associated to illnesses, as in the studies about burnout (CODO, 1999; PIOLLI *et al*, 2015).

As many of the testimonies already mentioned show, when discussing the emotional involvement of teachers and its consequence both as stress and as gratification, these emotional dimensions have not disappeared from São Paulo state schools, neither with the expansion since the 1980s of discourses based on an idea of professionalism (DALIGNA; SCHERER, 2017), nor with the later implementation of goal-based management, standardized assessments and financial rewards. In fact, these dimensions became even more invisible, nameless, since they cannot be quantified and measured, and since the discourse of professionalism hinders access to the maternal metaphors. Everything indicates that new managerialism made the teachers' task of dealing with those emotions even more solitary, because to the invisibility now one adds the incentive to individualism and to competition. In the case of the teaching profession, this can be one of the dimensions of what French sociologist Danièle Linhart calls "subjective precarization" within this sphere of the new forms of labor control, a feeling of not being able to find help with problems at work, not even from hierarchical superiors or from the overstretched workers collective bodies, a sentiment of isolation and neglect (LINHART, 2014, p. 46).

Moreover, these emotional dimensions seem to suit fully the control of the teaching work, both by guaranteeing commitment, dedication and extra labor, and by making room for the manipulation of guilt – both efficient forms to foster the workers self-control. Garcia and Anadon (2009) pointed out that these forms of control of the teaching work seek to "manage teachers from the inside out" (p. 79) by taking as their object the subjectivity of educators and the emotions in teaching. It is a stimulus to a "moral of self-accountability and guilt on the part of teachers who, allied to the deterioration of salaries and working conditions, has been contributing to intensify and self-intensify the teaching work, and to generate frustration and disillusionment" (2009, p. 65).

The point we want to make is, therefore, that in the São Paulo state school system new forms of management and control of the work of teachers have combined with previously existing characteristics that are associated to a feminine model of the teaching profession. These labor models appear superposed and mixed, sometimes linearly, sometimes contradictorily.

Such blending became manifest, materialized, in a notebook that teacher Zuleica showed to the researchers soon after the interview, explaining that she had it prepared for the starting school year (field notes, 14/02/2017). On the first pages there were texts about the teacher's life, about the values she regarded as important, two photographs of her, the drawing of a butterfly – which Zuleica declared having done because she believed that everything could be transformed in life –, and a clipping of an excerpt from Psalm 91¹⁰ from the Bible. Up to this point, the notebook looked like a diary, a form culturally related to feminine traditions of writing. But after that part, Zuleica put a list with the pupils of the class and, after that, added a hand-written list of the abilities that would be evaluated in the external assessments, and that should guide the planning of the classes. It is as if, after turning the “feminine” pages of the notebook, we jumped into the model of the new public management worker, efficient and focused on measurable results.

The same combination of feeling and rationalized management, of interior drive and external pressure appeared in Marlucy's testimony:

It is really a lot of guilt that we feel. And my therapist tells me not to... Not to carry this, to stop taking upon me things that aren't mine [...] But the pressure comes all over you, we know. The State signed an agreement with a consultancy company, I don't know if you have heard about MMR? It is a project to improve the results in the state school system. And then this consultancy asked for schools to create a Commission to discuss and find out the root of the problems, of the results of the school. [...] Then you can imagine what the conclusion was, can't you? Teachers are not capacitated, teachers don't do differentiated activities; it's always on the teacher, always. So, it is, like, a lot of pressure on us, no matter how much you deal with it in here [puts her hand on her chest], it is difficult. (Marlucy)

Garcia and Anadon (2009) pointed out to the same dynamics in the municipal school system they studied, with the official rhetoric making strategic use of the practices of care and of the feelings of guilt on the part of teachers to make them responsible for the results and to guarantee the intensification of labor.

AGAINST THE TIDE: “THE TROUBLE TO GO THERE AND FIND OUT WHO THAT PUPIL IS”

Contradictorily, this same commitment, this same involvement with each child, which opened the door to the precarization and intensification of labor, and which historically contributed to the overexploitation of teachers, are sources of criticism and dissatisfaction with the standardized and controlled management system. By emphasizing their responsibility for the children and not for numbers, and by recalling the individual dimension of teaching, by recovering the idea of an education that is not restricted to the transmission of contents, part of the teachers articulates criticisms to the current management of schools:

If you reach the target you get a bonus, the school gets a bonus; if you don't reach the target you don't get it. And there's also the flow, if there is a problem with dropout you don't get the bonus. So, it creates havoc in the school, going after the pupils who are missing classes. **And it is not out of concern for the pupil**, it is because of the bonus. (Marlucy, our emphasis)

Sometimes, we get some ready-made projects from the Education Board, they say: “This project is to help non-alphabetic pupils.” But, sometimes, it is something that doesn't make much sense for my pupil. And then later comes another demand, which is the expectation to put in practice that thing they sent ready. [...] Because that child, for the Education Board, she is just a number, she's just a little colored dot that is saying that she is still not alphabetic. **The Education Board doesn't take the trouble to go there and find out who that pupil is**, what difficulty she has, who are her family; so, they don't take that kind of trouble. (Cecília, our emphasis)

Even when they did not formulate criticisms explicitly, teachers contested daily in their practices the focus on quantifiable results, by valuing the affective relations with the pupils, and by getting involved with their integral development, as in many situations mentioned above. Therefore, if historically the femininity attributed to teachers was associated to lack of professionalism, and if it effectively displays tensions and contradictions, such as that of being a channel for overexploitation, this same femininity also involves an aversion to the standardization of teaching, to competitive rationality, to the depersonalization of relations and to the simplifications issuing from measurement.

Linhart (2009) warns against the difficulty to apprehend in a sociological study the forms of resistance in labor, especially if one tries to go beyond the collective movements, such as strikes and stoppages, and the more evident individual actions such as absenteeism

and sabotage. The author suggests that the analyses should look to the distance “between the prescribed labor and the real labor” (2009, p. 71), which can be interpreted as a space of confrontation and dispute. In particular, within the context of the new forms of labor regulation, resistances would be more individual and even less visible, with the new managerialism advancing over the practical knowledge and the subjectivity of workers and restricting the space for resistance.

In the case of the teachers of the first years of education in the São Paulo state school system, Administration has managed to standardize and control efficaciously the part of their work that involves the transmission of knowledge. The work prescribed to them is focused on contents and specific cognitive abilities that will be measured in standardized tests. But many insist – at the expense of their free time, of their sleep and even of their emotional balance – on taking care of the pupils, in caring for them in other aspects, and in perceiving them as unique, with their own rhythms and necessities that do not follow standards. On the other hand, the career prescribed to teachers is based on targets, on measurable results and rewarding, but they insist in placing financial reward in second place, in enjoying their work, and in seeing teaching as a way to change the reality around them. It is worth recalling that this set of characteristics is part of a pedagogical ideal gestated and reproduced within the school – both in formation courses and in the school culture – even when it is referred to from the viewpoint of maternity and domesticity.

Feminist thinking has been highlighting that one of the movements of expansion of the capital in contemporaneity is the mercantilization of areas seen as feminine, and hitherto little touched by its rules and logic, such as care (MORINI, 2008). The practices of integral and individualized attention of teachers can be understood in this context as acts of resistance to the logic of the market and a restatement of values seen as feminine that have marked the teaching activity for children for decades. They are often contradictory values, suffused with conservatism of gender and class, but still they are part of a refusal, albeit individual, unclear, and not always evident as resistance even for the teacher herself. In the current context of the state schools of São Paulo, caring means to mark a distance between the prescribed teaching labor and the real labor. It is a practice of autonomy, a form of teachers not letting the mechanisms of managerial administration control entirely their subjectivity; since they work out of love, they find accomplishment in their activity, they have hope. It is the way of making sure that the air in the school is still breathable, for them and for the children.

Teachers from the Guarulhos (SP) municipal school system interviewed by Penna (2017) considered that their work was the result of an ideal and gave them the chance to “intervene in society positively in some way” (PENNA, 2017, p. 63). They commented explicitly on the space at their disposal to organize their work and declared enjoying the freedom they still had in the classroom. “You are free to speak, you are a thinker”, said one of them (PENNA, 2017, p. 64). The author indicates that this space of freedom refers to going beyond the teaching of contents and working with the moral education of students – something we interpret as a practice of care.

Lastly, in the autonomy of the old vocationed teacher, that closed the door of the classroom behind her and made her decisions, there was also the affirmation of an intellectual, active and relational dimension of the teaching activity. When teachers today reaffirm this tradition, are they not telling us that they “miss” this power, are they not talking about the preservation of this interstice of freedom and of significant work?

CONCLUSIONS AND NEW QUESTIONS

In 1999, the study conducted by one of us concluded by stating the need to make explicit the practice of the care in schools as an intrinsic part of the teaching activity. And also, that there should be a collective critical reflection about this, so that relations of care were moved away from their reference to maternity and were not a source of oppression or disqualification for those who take care. But it was already foreseen that this utopia was becoming more and more distant due to the “current emphasis of educational policies on technique, on efficiency and competitiveness to be reached through the saving of resources” (CARVALHO, 1999, p. 235). The avalanche of new managerialism policies that swept across the state schools of São Paulo only confirmed that prognosis, delegitimizing even further the caring practices of teachers. In these circumstances, the restatement of the dedication, of the idealistic work and of the full attention to students acquires a sense of resistance that they did not have for the teachers interviewed by Luís Pereira (1969). And we could ask ourselves if teachers today are not valuing even more those practices of care precisely for representing a space of autonomy.

In this context, it seems reasonable to suppose that the ever more frequent proposals to define socio-emotional competencies to

be developed under a standard curriculum, measured and assessed in a centralized manner in the public school systems, represent an advance of new managerialism over this grey area. Present in the personnel departments of companies since the mid-1990s, the trainings about emotional intelligence, as well as tests and assessments of socio-emotional competencies have already been incorporated into the school curriculum in various countries, and have been proposed and tested in different public school systems in Brazil, or included under different labels in documents such as the National Common Curricular Basis (BNCC), always under the auspices of organizations and institutes linked to businesses. There are, thus, strong indications that the dispute around curricula based on social-emotional competencies (or, less directly, on the so-called integral formation), which transform the dealing with emotions into measurable abilities, will be decisive to keep or otherwise lose this territory of relative freedom today exercised as a practice of care by the teachers.

Lastly, we can conclude that in the teaching work in the first years of schooling, dimensions considered as feminine are ancient but still quite clear; that they can give rise to mechanisms of control and exploitation of labor, as well as originate resistance and opposition. It is not a simple replacement of working models, neither just an instrumentalization of characteristics seen as feminine in order to guarantee the overexploitation of the work of teachers. It is about living together and combining these models of teacher labor constituting new old working relations.

To know how the future forms of collective articulation and resistance in public schools will be belongs to the realm of the imponderable, considering the changes brought about by new managerialism that make forms of control advance over the subjectivity of teachers, that individualize even more practices and responsibilities and push the caring, the idealism and the pleasure of teaching to the field of the nameless, since they are (still) not quantifiable. But we dare say that the collective opposition to new managerialism will have much to gain if it does not abandon the territory of the subjectivity of teachers to be controlled by the uses made of it by guilt and isolation; and if the practices of care to be controlled by means of curricula based on social-emotional competencies. Lastly, perhaps new forms of collective action may take into account the love of teaching and the practices of care already existing, and may derive support, in a critical manner, from this reinvented feminine tradition.

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NOTES

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² We use the term feminization in the sense of the association of characteristics socially seen as feminine, and not in the sense of the presence of women.

³ In view of the predominance of women both in the teaching profession as a whole and in the group interviewed, teachers will be referred in this text in the feminine. All names are fictitious. All interviewees signed a term of free informed consent.

⁴ Published only in 1969, the book by Luís Pereira results from his doctoral thesis presented to FFLCH-USP in 1961. The author informs that the fieldwork was conducted in 1959.

⁵ All interviewees were asked to classify themselves in racial terms using the IBGE categories (white, black, brown, yellow, indigenous). We also recorded here other race categories, when interviewees indicated disagreement with that classification.

⁶ This aspect was developed in Carvalho, 2018.

⁷ The precarious contracts of teachers in the São Paulo state school system presented different nomenclatures through time. Currently, there are temporary teachers, occasional teachers – that substitute for colleagues – and stable teachers, which acquired stability in their posts without public exams by force of the 1988 Constitution. (MOURA, 2013).

⁸ Not to mention domestic chores, which implied even more working hours at home for all of them, including the two men interviewed.

⁹ It is worth recalling that Cynthia was also the teacher that spoke more directly against the association between teaching and maternity, as seen above.

¹⁰ “Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High//will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.//I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,//my God, in whom I trust.”//Surely he will save you//from the fowler’s snare//and from the deadly pestilence.”

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Contact:

Marília Pinto de Carvalho
Av. da Universidade, nº 308
São Paulo | SP | Brasil
CEP 05.508-040