EMOTIONAL EDUCATION: PRACTICES AND DISCOURSES OF SUBJECTIVATION[1]

La educación emocional: prácticas y discursos de subjetivación

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ABSTRACT

  Education, rather than anonymous, impersonal, and monolithic, is a heterogeneous and overdetermined process in which the learner constructs him/herself from diverse processes of subjectivation. The purpose of this essay is to discuss the critical scope of the notion of subjectivation in light of the introduction of emotional education in the Chilean school context. We argue that it is not only a normative and external discourse (equivalent to the technology of power) but also an effective tool of self-control (technology of the self) that models the emotionality of students,

committing them to a particular work on themselves. Thus, from a genealogical perspective, emotional education can be analyzed as an institutionalized and theoretically legitimized operationalization for the instauration of an established order, through the acquisition of certain competences useful not only for the subjects to sustain and adapt to this order, but also to reproduce it (optimism, resilience, tolerance to frustration, flexibility, among others). In conclusion, the importance of thinking education not as a concrete, rational operation, applied to a prefigured object (the learner), but as a complex articulated becoming, composed of different vectors, including the processes of subjectivation that occur within it, is emphasized. From this distinction, emotional education reveals its Janic aspect, being able to be found, on the one hand, at the service of the emancipation of the established order, aiming at the modern ideal of a reflective and sovereign citizen and, on the other hand, contributing precisely to the subjection and subjugation of the learners through certain practices materialized in the educational device.

Keywords: Education; Subject; Subjectivation; Emotional education; Competences.

RESUMEN

La educación, más que un proceso anónimo, impersonal y monolítico, es un proceso heterogéneo y sobredeterminado en donde el educando se construye a sí mismo a partir de diversos procesos de subjetivación. El propósito de este ensayo es discutir críticamente los alcances de la noción de subjetivación a la luz de la introducción de la educación emocional en el contexto escolar chileno. Sostenemos que se trata no solo de un discurso normativo y exterior (equivalente a una tecnología de poder), sino también de una eficaz herramienta de autocontrol (tecnología del yo) que modela la emocionalidad de los educandos comprometiéndolos en un particular trabajo sobre sí mismos. Así, desde una perspectiva genealógica, la educación emocional puede ser examinada como una operacionalización institucionalizada y teóricamente legitimada para la instauración de un orden establecido, mediante la adquisición de determinadas competencias útiles no solo para que los sujetos sostengan y se adapten a dicho orden, sino también para que lo reproduzcan (optimismo, resiliencia, tolerancia a la frustración, flexibilidad, entre otras.). Como conclusión, se subraya la importancia de pensar la educación no como una operación concreta, racional, que se aplica a un objeto prefigurado (el educando), sino como un devenir articulado complejo, compuesto por distintos vectores, entre ellos los procesos de subjetivación que se dan en su interior. A partir de esta distinción, la educación emocional revela su aspecto jánico, pudiendo encontrarse, por un lado, al servicio de la emancipación del orden establecido, apuntando al ideal moderno de un ciudadano reflexivo y soberano y, por el otro, contribuyendo precisamente a la sujeción y al sometimiento de los educandos a través de determinadas prácticas materializadas en el dispositivo educativo.

Palabras claves: educación; sujeto; subjetivación; educación emocional; competencias.

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between educational apparatuses and learners has been histor-ically crucial in the field of pedagogical research itself, becoming one of the main issues within the metaphysical tradition of the way of thinking in the Western world. The cross-sectional nature and extension of this problem is due, among others, to the fact that it belongs to an earlier and more extensive discursive plot, resorting to contrapositions such as *the system* and *the individual, the universal, the partic-ular* and *the singular, the abstract* and *the concrete,* and *the superordinate* and *the subordinate* as possible ways of thinking. This entails, first, the complex relationship between the One and the Whole and, second, the educational process in general and its subject in particular. These systematizations, traditionally arranged according to *top–down* and *bottom–up* models, however productive they were for decades, have proved to be insufficient in light of the emergence and critical establishment of the notion of subjectivation. In turn, this results from recent revisions of one of the pivotal concepts of that discussion and the discourse of Modernity in particular: the notion of subject.

Due to its strategic position as a hinge concept, articulating the different instances mentioned above, any revision or reformulation of this notion immedi-ately affects not only the neighboring or adjacent concepts—for example, the terms reason, action, consciousness, and power—but also the ways of understanding the relations between them. This essay proposes a discussion on the consequences of the critical reception of a certain aspect of the concept of subjectivation, derived from Michel Foucault's contributions, regarding the way of conceiving the relations between the school system, on the one hand, and the learner, traditionally thought of as a subject (of education), on the other. The following observations, after a brief introduction of the issue in question, will consider in more detail the case of the Chilean educational system and, in particular, a singular strand of its most recent innovations: the incorporation of emotional education.

2. SUBJECTIVATION IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Foucault's theoretical developments tend to be placed, rightly or wrongly, in certain lineages or genealogies[2] including some of Louis Althusser's works (Le

2. The idea of genealogy is considered with the purpose of disassociating oneself from any idea of "antecedent" or "precursor" (cf. Saar, 2007). Precisely, it is the reference to this notion, of Nietzschean roots, that allows us to clarify, in principle, the nature of the relationship between Foucault and Althusser. Although, in general terms, both have been considered among the "post" or, in the case of Manfred Frank (1984), "neo-structuralist" authors, beyond this general and descriptive label and certain common references (including Freud and Marx), are a series of differences, precisely with regard to the supposed similarities in terms of references that define their respective positions. We would like to mention at least three of these differences. First, while Althusser assumes an "epistemological rupture" with Marx

Blanc, 2004; Ryder, 2013)[3]. At the beginning of the 1970s, Althusser suggested that, beyond the indispensable character of the already classic repressive apparatuses of the State (police and army) and their fundamental influence in disciplinary societies, the ideological apparatuses of the State (the family, the Church, and, mainly, the school) had a productive, pro-positive role, not only in terms of ensuring the status quo but also in terms of its perpetuation through the reproduction of the production relations (Althusser, 2003).

Beyond discussing, with the meticulousness and extension that would merit the eventual continuity of Althusserian thought in Foucault, we are particularly interested in reviewing the possible consequences, for the field of education, of the repercussion of some of his works and the evolution of the notion of subjectivation in particular. In this respect, within the wide range of emphases and orientations that are part of his contemporary reception, in relation to the issue in question, it is possible to highlight two traces of the Althusserian approach present, to a certain extent, that is, integrated—and, with it, rewritten and transcribed—in the respective conceptual space in which Foucault's thought is situated: first, the centrality given to the school and education, two devices that were distinguished in Althusser as the most important apparatuses of domination in any model of government, and second, the need to rethink reproduction not only through the classic "repressive"

and enrolls himself in a certain tradition of Marxism, Foucault's relationship with Marx can be characterized through the following two quotations: "As far as I'm concerned, Marx doesn't exist" (Foucault, 1979a, p. 122) and "but there is also a sort of game that I play with this. I often quote concepts, texts and phrases from Marx, but without feeling obliged to add the authenticating label of a footnote with a laudatory phrase to accompany the quotation. (...) But I quote Marx without saying so" (1979b, p. 100). Second, while the Althusserian interpretation of Freud, especially in the compendium of texts published in Spanish under the title *Structuralism and Psychoanalysis* (1970) is schematic, or almost stereotyped, imposed by the post-structuralist method, in the case of Foucault, it is a much more detailed, more *én detail*, more meticulous, and more dynamic relation—more volatile in time as well. This allows for an effective use of Freud, an "application" to problems not thought of by him, respectively, makes it possible for the readings of Freud to be of emancipatory nature, leaning toward the detachment of any relation of subjection on the part of the reader or of subjugation of the author read. See, in this regard: Birman (2008) *Foucault and Psychoanalysis*. Third, while for Althusser focus is placed on the analysis and weakening of the notion of ideology, in the case of Foucault, possibly as an effect of the first two differences highlighted, the purpose, apart from the emphasis on power relations, is to discuss the scope of the notion of knowledge and, on that basis, to test the concept of subjectivation as a movement in two moments, two directions and two dynamics. For this last reason in particular, we are interested in Foucault's problematization of a field in whose introduction Louis Althusser was engaged in (as shown, for example, in the discussion in the collective book *Psychology, Ideology and Science*, published in 1975, by N. Braunstein et al.), but of which he remained a prisoner in a way that does not translate into a contribution to the problem under discussion.

3.   In addition to Althusser, Foucault has also been associated with Nietzsche (Cortez, 2015; Rosenberg & Westfall, 2018), as a "reader" of Kant (Gros & Dávila, 1998; Moro, 2003) and Marx (Castro-Gómez, 2005; Diaz Bernal, 2018). Exercises that, beyond the evaluative judgements about their success or otherwise, are interesting because they open up possible relationships.

route, based on a rapid and superficial assimilation of Freudian approaches and of the notion of repression in particular, but also to make way for the problematization of reproduction by a properly productive route that exceeds any mechanical and stereotyped repetition. Specifically, education, and therefore, its main devices such as kindergarten, school, university, and other related institutions, may be regarded as ideal places to intervene productively in the framework of power relations that runs through and sustains a society, precisely reproducing its (subjects) supports.

These Althusserian scopes become especially visible in Foucault's work once he introduces the notion of *governmentality* into his conceptual framework (Foucault, 2006). As already indicated in other occasions (Garay, 2022), this notion will become fundamental in the methodology used by Foucault to continue his work until his death, as it allows him to escape from what Deleuze (2006) called "his theoretical impasse" (p. 49)[4] and thus recognize the limitations of his previous conception of power, both sovereign and disciplinary, which made it impossible to escape from it and its purely restrictive and limiting relations. Thus, at the end of the 70s, Foucault will support the thesis that power has changed in its essence, from a power that ensures the reproduction of the relations of production, from its disciplinary exercise, to the form of a *biopower* whose objective is to control the population through what he called *security dispositifs*, placing individuals against a triangle: "sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management" (Foucault, 2006, p. 135). In this way, he introduces the notion of governmentality for the first time, conceptualized as the "set constituted by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics" that manage to impose

> a type of power that we can call "government" over all others: sovereignty, discipline, and which induced, on the one hand, the development of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses and, on the other, the development of a whole set of knowledge (p. 136).

The power of these new *security dispositifs*, Foucault warns, is not exhausted simply in sovereignly managing a collective mass but rather in governing life itself from its most intimate details and as thoroughly as possible. For the same reason, it is a power that is no longer exercised exclusively in a vertical, descending, and repressive manner, but it is rather the population itself that exercises it over itself,

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4.   Deleuze (2015), reading Foucault, asks: "is there nothing 'beyond' power? Was he [Foucault] not locking himself into power relations as in a dead end? For Deleuze, in fact, this theoretical impasse into which Foucault would have entered by conceptualising power relations in such an overwhelmingly totalising way would explain the eight-year pause after the publication of the first volume of Histoire de la sexualité in 1976, even though volumes II and III were already programmed. It would be a pause in which Foucault tries to think about how to "cross that line, to go over to the other side, to go beyond power-knowledge", thus opening up the third axis of his work: subjectivation (or ethics). Understood as the line of the outside, the axis of our confrontation with the absolute outside, in which - and by which - we become subjects.

bestowing the subjects with a particular responsibility in their own agency. This idea of a productive and not exclusively repressive power forces Foucault to rethink a series of surrounding concepts, for example, a notorious centrality in Foucault's work, the *dispositif*, whose genealogy (in Foucault) refers to his previous notion of *épistémè*.[5]

Marking this transition is by no means trivial, as in this exercise undertaken by Foucault, we can see that the productive and not just limiting dimension of power begins to gain a core place in his theoretical architecture. In the specific case of *épistémè,* we can see how he dislocates a notion that, until then, was exclusively related to the field of the thinkable in a given period—in other words, to the field of *knowledge*[6]—to introduce the notion of *dispositif*, which includes the relations of power and the possible changes that these trigger in relation to the subjects themselves. Foucault therefore adds the very transformations that the subject undergoes into the equation as part of the relation between knowledge and power. In other words, unlike the concept of *épistémè*, the notion of *dispositif* introduces new cleavages that are fundamental, in that 1) it is not only related to *knowledge* but also establishes an intimate connection between knowledge and power: "there is neither a relation of power without the relative constitution of a field of knowledge nor knowledge that does not presuppose and does not constitute relations of power at the same time" (Foucault, 2013, p. 37), 2) it establishes a dispersal of power along a whole multiplicity of elements, and 3) it describes the production of modes of subjectivation, understood as the dispositions that the subject adopts from this particular organization of forces between knowledge and power.

In this way, dispositifs are nothing but a heterogeneous set of elements, both discursive and non-discursive, established on certain dimensions of life, and turn them into coherent domains and strategic fields that trace these lines of force between knowledge, power, and subjectivity through different *technologies of government*. Hence, Foucault outlines governmentality as the art of governing life in which sovereignty, discipline, and the management of the subject over himself converge. The latter is only possible through the introduction of new control techniques different from the *technologies of power*, exercised from the outside, which are imposed and dominate and objectify the subject from "above," as is the case of legal regulations. These are the *technologies of the self,* defined by him as those techniques that "allow individuals to carry out, on their own or with the help of others, a certain number

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5.   In this regard, volume I of History of Sexuality almost serves as an introduction to this new reconceptualization of power. There, Foucault begins to rethink questions such as those of the *dispositif*, making it clear that he undertakes a strong turn from his earlier works.

6.   For Foucault, épistémè constitutes an intermediate region formed by the ordering codes of a culture (language, perceptual schemes, etc.), and the reflective apparatus on this order (sciences and philosophy), and which allows establishing the limits of knowledge or, in other words, the field of what is thinkable for a given epoch.

of operations on their body and soul, thoughts, behavior, or any form of being, thus obtaining a transformation of themselves" (Foucault, 2008, p. 48).[7] Moreover, some years later, Foucault will specify that what he has been thinking of as *govern-mentality* is precisely the space of contact between the technologies of power and those of oneself. That is, the space between the government itself and the others.

This non-legal conception of power (Foucault, 1996) is opposed to any vision of the subject conceived: first, as an already armed, pre-constituted entity, which subsequently goes through the process of education undergoing minor or behavioral transformations, and second, as a passive recipient of subjects, values and other contents provided by the educational apparatus. On the contrary, in line with the idea—introduced by Edgardo Castro (2004), which can be traced in *Discipline and Punish*—that power, far from obeying merely repressive ends in the privative or negative sense, "must be regarded as a positive reality, that is, as a manufacturer or producer of individuality" (Castro, 2004, p. 264). This radical change in the liberal and juridical conception of power allows us to remain skeptical of any approach that asserts that the subject is an essence, extra-, pre-, or a-historical substance (or in relation to any "anthropological universal"). Also, at the same time, it creates the conditions of possibility for a recovery—and rewriting in another field of relations of signification—of the concept of subject through the subjectivation option [*assu-jettissement*].

Following Edgardo Castro (2004), "it is possible to distinguish two senses of the expression 'modes of subjectivation' in Foucault's work: a broad sense [...] and a more restricted one, in relation to the Foucauldian concept of ethics" (p. 333). Regarding the first, Foucault (1988), in a text entitled *The Subject and Power*, notes "My aim [during the last 20 years of work], on the contrary, has been to create a history of the different modes of subjectivation of the human being in our culture" (p. 3). Regarding these, although it may seem paradoxical, Foucault refers to them as "modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects" (p. 3), or as Castro (2004) specifies, "modes in which the subject appears as the object of a given relation of knowledge and power" (p. 333). In this text, Foucault provides the keys to distinguish, *après coup*, three modes of subjectivation. First, he talks about modes of objectification that claim access to the status of sciences. Here, Foucault refers, as an example, to linguistics, economics, and biology, suggesting to us to think of the subject, respectively, as the speaking subject, the wealth-producing subject, and the subject bestowed with life. Second, Foucault refers to modes that proceed through divisive practices (both of the subject in relation to him/herself and the subject in relation to others). These practices constitute exclusive pairs, such as the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, and the criminal and the probative

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7.   He also affirms the existence of technologies of production, "which make it possible to produce, transform or manipulate things" and of "technologies of sign systems, which make it possible to use signs, senses, symbols or significations" (Foucault, 2008, p. 48).

man. Third and last, he makes reference to modes through which "the human being turns himself or herself into a subject" (Foucault, 1988, p. 3).

This third mode has been studied in an exemplary manner in the *History of Sexuality*. The second and more narrowly defined meaning is found in the second volume of the *History of Sexuality* and in an article entitled 'Ethics'. In this context, the modes of subjectivation appear as one of the four elements based on which the concept of ethics is delimited (the other three being ethical substance, the forms of elaboration of ethical work, and the teleology of the moral subject). Broadly speaking, the term "ethics" refers to the establishment of a relationship with oneself, namely, a link that is not a mere verification of something pre-existent and existing autonomously and previously but a relationship in which the subject is constituted as a moral subject. It specifically indicates that the human being becomes a subject, also alluding to "the way in which the individual establishes his or her relationship with that rule and recognizes themself as bound by the obligation to put it into practice" (Foucault, 1984, p. 19). In other words, he becomes aware of and behaves reflexively with respect to his relationships (deterministic, linear, socio-symbolic, coercive, etc.) with the normative set of rules and, as we could Freudianly add, with the law.

Now, specifically in the field of education, we can see how the notion of subjectivation has been used, for instance, to account for the idea that "educational subjects are formed through processes of subjectivation of powers, knowledge, and imagined meanings that begin shaping their identity within the educational devices they are part of" (Angulo, 2010, p. 157). Therefore, education is constituted as the space of interest for this reflection, inasmuch as the *school* is understood as not the only (physical, enclosed) place where said mediating and socio-cultural transfer processes take place, as it has been originally and explicitly conceived; neither it is understood as the place destined for transferring knowledge, techniques, and tools inherent to a given discipline. Rather, it is worth conducting a critical reading on the school and its educational practices, considering them not a mere cosmetic or orthopedic operation with an accessory or subsidiary impact on an already shaped subject but as key elements of the constitution itself—and de-constitution—of a plural, heterogeneous, assembled subject, always under (un)development.

In the Chilean educational context, its convoluted and long history that dates back to around the so-called *founding years*, focus will be placed on the last decade of the 20th century, specifically in the years during which the first references to the concept of *emotional education* in the modern sense have been made. The analysis conducted on the experience of recent education reforms in Chile reflects the efforts to attempt to turn the comprehensive training process [*Bildung*][8] of individuals (inspired

8.   The concept of *Bildung*, untranslatable into English and whose genealogy far exceeds what could be suggested here, has its antecedents in the Greek concept of paideia and is probably due to Meister Eckhart (Herdt, 2019). Its entry into pedagogy was effected through Johann Amos Comenius and his use of the notion of eruditus (enlightened, 'elder-of-age'), which literally meant to remove or eliminate the

by illustrated ideas, derived from the *Aufklärung or the les Lumières)* into a sort of industrial, technical, mass production, aimed at fulfilling international performance standards, in which goals and teaching actions themselves have become sidelined (Bustamante, 2006).

This way, in neoliberal times, educational public policies were conceived as alternative ways to maintain and perpetuate the ruling order, not exclusively by means of the timely removal of any potentially rebel grounds, but also through the active exercise of power understood as productive force. Under the "*New Public Management*," a series of approaches and measures have been brought together, which of an unappealable imposition of a privatizing view of the public through the implementation of changes, both sudden and irreversible. These are mostly linked to marketization (Hall & McGinity, 2015), measurement and management (Grinberg, 2006), in addition to the growing importance of performativity (Soto, Mera, Núñez, Sisto & Fardella, 2016). Overall, beyond its specific differences, this type of control seeks to establish a set of management dynamics that are characterized by their plasticity and malleability. whose aspirations with regards to power management issues are not only legitimized from the invocation of given theoretical models but, alongside the interventions in question, they bring along a set of apparatus of objectivation and measurement of effects, no matter how variable and questionable they may be.

The following section proposes an analysis of a specific *subjectivation dispositif*[9], which illustrates the aforementioned and allows for testing how certain concepts, originally shaped under the wing of disciplinary fields other than education, are assimilated and adapted, not for purely pedagogical purposes, but with a view to enhance the effectiveness of the ongoing subjectivation practices. We specifically refer to the progressive and silent incorporation of the so-called *emotional education* into curricula, in the case of Chile.

3. EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

On the basis of the alleged antagonism between the rational and emotional, which in educational terms would entail a historic privilege to the first to the detriment of the second, a—reactive, controversial, and compensatory—movement has developed, reclaiming and reassessing the emotional aspects related to education (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2004). The said trend has been strengthened, not

quality of crude, brutish, unwrought, uncultivated, uncultured, coarse, clumsy. The secularization of the concept took place in the 18th century through Pestalozzi, Herder, Schiller, Goethe and Kant, and took on the meaning of perfecting the human being. During German idealism, it experienced a turn towards the subjective, until W. von Humboldt finally turned the idea into a program.

9. To go deeper into the notion of dispositif, we suggest Foucault (1985, pp. 127-162), Deleuze (1990, pp. 155-163).

merely in the Chilean case, owing to its mutual understanding with the so-called *positive psychology* (Cabanas & González, 2021). The said movement is supported by an idea, which at this point, recalls the emergence of the *third party force* in the field of psychology at the beginning of the second half of the last century. This idea affirms that emotions, which may have been historically neglected by the traditional school education, must imperatively become an explicit part of education for the training of holistic, competent individuals, provided with the necessary skills to face the challenges of modern living, whatever they may be.

The main difference concerning the emergence and spread of humanism in the 1960s is that said hypothesis, far from remaining within a conceptual or theoretical sphere, has been brought to life in a great number of instructions, handbooks, and even governmental programs (such as the HPV—the Spanish acronym of Skills for Life—program), geared toward developing emotional skills, either in the field of education (Bisquerra, 2003; 2011) or business (Rodríguez & Sanz, 2013). Another difference of the celebrated boom of humanism in the psychology area which, at the time, reported the discursive and practical hegemony of psychoanalysis and behaviorism has to do with the fact that said emphasis on the emotional and the positive, far from being revolutionary, radical, and isolated, proposing the subversion of the established devices and the collapse of hegemonic power relations, offers the subject a set of techniques to better adjust to the pre-established order and, in the best of cases, to positively stand out in a presumably legitimate environment. In fact, Cabanas & Sánchez (2016) suggest that positive psychology, by disregarding the whole questioning of established practices, precisely functions by taking the baton of the humanist movement, although reversing its logic. The success and school achievements no longer define the happiness of the student; in fact, it is quite the opposite case: Their happiness is what will determine their success.

In order to tackle the emergency of this phenomenon, although superficially, it would be useful to refer to the so-called "affective turn" in social and human sciences. This is a set of reconceptualizations on the emotionalization of public life, which began to affect the academic sphere by the end of the 20th century. "Affective turn" directly refers to "the growing and crucial role of emotions in the transformation of the sphere of public life, such as the media, health, or the legal field, among others" (Lara and Enciso, 2013, p. 102).[10] In this vein, with contributions, particularly from anthropology and sociology, the idea that emotions are mainly of a socio–cultural character (Illouz, 2007) is strongly founded, despite its biological component. This implies that the emotional and affective experience varies in function of the different cultural repertoires, and thus, it would depend on specific power mechanisms and

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10.   The authors themselves consider the studies of Massumi (1995) and Sedgwick & Frank (1995) to be the pioneers in marking this affective turn in the human sciences, using both Spinoza and Deleuze and their cartographies to propose the capacity of bodies to affect and be affected.

structures. For Luna and Mantilla (2018), for instance, emotions can be conceived as prescriptions created by the social system, which takes us to its clear political and regulatory component that evinces the disciplinary overflow that is necessary to deal with the complexity of this dimension of life and that may make us pass through emotional forms of exclusion and control and even affective possibilities of resistance, and vice versa (Cordero, Moscoso & Viu, 2018). In other words, the emotional aspect of education may take shape based on "experiences in which subjects feel recognized or, otherwise, as experiences of social invisibility" (Nobile, 2019, p. 10).

Hence, Nobile (2019) insists on retrieving these deepest aspects of the affective turn at the moment of speaking of educational phenomena; this is essential inasmuch as it allows for problematizing the *education-emotions* relationship from its intertwining with processes of production and reproduction of social-educational inequalities and, above all, with the manners in which the school gives rise to subjectivities. The shape taken by this relationship between emotions and education in the educational practice is, therefore, fundamental in a series of levels, especially due to their practical implications. Nonetheless, in the last decades, we have witnessed the growth of an emotional speech within the educational scope, that do not necessarily respond to the same logic of problematizations that the affective turn of social and human sciences seemed to offer us. This is a trend to promote a systematic and structured management of the subjects themselves on their emotions which, this century, have become a new actual paradigm to rethink education.

This new starting point, however, seems not to stop, neither in the specificity of daily experiences within the educational space which, explicitly and implicitly, overwhelm our affective world, nor in the possibility of subverting the order established it offers to us. Far from that, it deals with a proposal that is rather focused on the urge to train emotional *skills and abilities* in the classroom, with which students would be better prepared to face the world and integrate into a society commonly described as *changing, challenging*, and *complex* and which, in the Chilean case, responds to a deeply neoliberal type of society—in other words, to better adjust to a given order. This way, the *education–emotions* relationship has limited itself to the mere need to work with content associated with, above all, positive emotions within the educational space (i.e., optimism, resilience, frustration, tolerance, impulse control, happiness, etc.), thus resorting to a diverse set of techniques and tools, often originated in worlds other than the educational one (such as mindfulness or yoga). In this sense, these are exploited partially or completely ignoring the fact that, before adapting and consolidating the *status quo*, what the affective turn promotes is a deeply critical and emancipator exercise from the questioning of the power relations shaped on the *emotional–affective*.

This way, emotions currently turn into this new educational paradigm that has been widely disseminated and materialized under the *Emotional Education* label

(Bisquerra, 2005; 2009). Nonetheless, however accepted and widespread it may be today, its sudden emergence, distanced from the problematizations of the affective turn in the social sciences, as well as its rapid and uncritical expansion, invites us to be cautious and undertake a critical exercise aimed at revealing what determines its articulation in greater depth.

In this sense, as Nobile (2019) points out, despite the fact that it is possible to identify nuances today within Emotional Education (hereinafter, EE), the contributions under its name tend to share a clear discursive matrix that is nourished both by positive psychology and the developments of the acclaimed *emotional intelligence* (Goleman, 1995), which have been articulated, both explicitly and implicitly, in a *dominant discourse* within the educational field (Álvarez, 2018). This brings particular ways of understanding, managing, and modeling emotions into life, over other possible ways.

Thus, one of the aspects that characterizes the aforementioned conceptualities is that, instead of unveiling and opposing the tyranny of end-oriented rationalities, it considers and incorporates the field of intelligence in its argumentation: first, in order to understand emotions in principle alien to rational understanding, and second, to elaborate, on the basis of that understanding, strategies and behaviors conducive to successfully deal and self-manage those aspects of the self which are traditionally resistant to rational management. It is decisive that, with respect to this reconceptualization of emotions, the more global and transversal spheres, such as the WHO, have considered them as *life skills* (World Health Organization, 1993). In this position, the apparent understandability of a term as catchy as misleading masks its radical indeterminacy, since by linguistically and conceptually reducing the plurality inherent to the notion of life(s), it evades and leaves in suspense an essential question: for which kind of life(s)?[11]

It is not surprising that EI, endorsed by global health and mental health organizations in particular, has come to be assumed without inconvenience in the current paradigms of education, consolidating itself as a central element of the EE, which seeks the development of certain strategies that allow them to go in search—or,

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11.   Leaving that question open-ended for the ways of life (highlighting their plurality and irreducibility) constitutes a critical and profoundly counter-hegemonic gesture. When attention is paid to contemporary technologies of governance, there is no doubt about the centrality of the need to produce a certain type of subjectivity in accordance with the needs of the market (competitive, individualistic, efficient, optimistic and resilient). As Laval and Dardot (2015) would say, what is at stake in neoliberalism is not, but the very form of our existence. Hence Sztulwark (2020), for example, following very closely what Suely Rolnik developed in Brazil, proposes a distinction between *modes and forms* of life; *modes of life* being the way of living as suggested by the structures of power, while *forms of life* imply a questioning of the automatisms and linearities that the dominant rationality proposes. For this reason, in the context of emotional education, to speak of it as a life skill in a generic way, supposes an adaptation to the neo-liberal way of life, rather than an opening with emancipatory potential as it could be thought from the *affective turn*.

rather, in the hunt—for maximum well-being and happiness. The search for and, of course, the attainment, not only of happiness and fulfillment but also of the maximum possible of both, forms the horizon of expectations to which current educational practices belong. In this manner, EE proposes—or rather, imposes—not only the development but also the production of emotionally competent subjects by promoting certain qualities, traits, capacities, and knowledge that are particularly useful in the capitalist context we live in (e.g., frustration tolerance, stress management, resilience, flexibility to adapt to change, and uncertainty, among others), thus playing a part in the pressures currently exerted on the educational system to adjust to the needs of the economic world (Solé Blanch, 2020).

It is striking that, among well-intentioned education professionals, there is a frequent appeal to neuro-educational innovation as a justification for the implementation of these discourses and practices. Especially because this revaluation of emotions in general, and of positive emotions in particular, has been the object of important conceptual, epistemic and historical criticisms. This is the case of the very concept of *emotional intelligence* (EI) which, despite its strong questioning (Geher, 2004), has overcome all resistance, permeating the educational space to its remotest corners. Objections such as those of Barraza (2018), which are part of a critique of the biased interpretation of neuroscientific facts in education, known as *neuromyths* (Pallarés-Domínguez, 2021), and where he states that neither multiple intelligences nor EI are theories based on scientific evidence have also been disregarded. Likewise, it has been warned that the concept of EI is neither well defined nor agreed upon, and its critical reception within the field has been denounced early on (Hughes, 2005), nor can it be clearly differentiated from the combination of personality variables and aspects of cognitive ability (Humphrey, Curran, Morris, Farrell & Woods, 2007). Additionally, it has been shown that neither EI has incremental predictive validity for academic performance, either above or below the personality and IQ variables (Barchard, 2003)—two ambiguous and polyvalent concepts, which have historically resisted any binding conceptual definition—nor that the presumed relationship between EI and school performance is as its founder claims (Barraza, 2018).

Therefore, in spite of the numerous and worthy criticisms, the domination exerted by the meaning of EI that Goleman ascribes[12] to it has led to it being thought of as nothing less than *the best predictor of success in life* and as an element not only vital for school performance but also for work success, marital happiness, and physical health, being also capable of predicting no less than up to 80% of success in life (Pool, 1997). This establishes all kinds of links with notions belonging to a domain

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12. It is important to mention that the first to use the notion of emotional intelligence as a defined construct were Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1989, for whom it consisted of a hypothetical set of skills that would allow processing information coming from emotions to be used in the resolution of everyday problems.

that is not only proto- or per-scientific, but also frankly ideological, as occurs, in fact, with the idea of *success in life*, thus revealing the simultaneous presence of a double bias: both ideological and scientific (Cabanas, and González, 2021). In other words, and paraphrasing Meirieu (2022), these pedagogical trends that uncritically pretend and shield themselves in scientism, often hide the social, philosophical, and normative theories and purposes that encourage them from us.

Nevertheless, the advance of EI, and above all the naturalness with which it has been adopted in the current educational paradigm, seems irreversible. This, as the success of EI in particular and of EE in general has been consolidated by other means, outside the scientific debate and the validity of its concepts, but no less efficient for that reason. When consulting the official website of the Chilean Ministry of Education, for example, one can see this naturalness reflected in the mission that this entity proposes for basic education (primary), where it states that "during basic education, students develop positive self-esteem and self-awareness, learn to work individually and in teams, and develop responsibility and tolerance to frustration" (Ministry of Education, n.d., para. 3). The same emphasis can be observed in secondary education, where, in addition, the urgency for students to be able to "*fully integrate into society*" is added. Again: what kind of society should we fully integrate into? To a neoliberal, prefigured society, endorsed by tradition and customs, in whose design its actors have no influence whatsoever? And, what does full integration into this society imply?

Considering the complexity and preponderance of the problem, that the existence of several angles from which the critique for the spread of EI in the different levels of educational projects can be outlined is not surprising, among them, the rise of the emotional in the curricula. In this case, in accordance with what was initially stated, we are interested in highlighting how these modifications establish and promote the forging of practices of domination that the subjects in the process of constitution not only suffer but also constantly exert on themselves. Thus, unlike what happened in the main classical models, this way of subjection requires neither repression in the classical sense, nor sanction or punishment, nor a resignation of self, since it is based on generating *skills* and *attitudes*, which, as Foucault would say, seek a change in oneself "in order to achieve a certain state of happiness, purity, or wisdom" (Foucault, 2008, p. 48)—a change that is not only circumscribed to the behavioral sphere and goes beyond the contingent and transitory, materializing in the configuration of an *ethos*.

As a consequence of the above, it is possible to appreciate how emotionality, first, is revalued and conceptually introduced in the formative projects, and then, in a second step, is left in the hands of the subjects to be educated, instead of operating from the outside; it becomes a tool of (self-)control. Unlike what happens in classical emancipatory practices, this control does not seek autonomy with respect to the institutional, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions that created the conditions of possibility of such a mode of subjectivation but rather contributes, from this sort

of *inner foreignness*, to the consolidation of said conditions. They shape people's emotionality, leaving the weight of the issue itself on the individual. By leaving the responsibility in the hands of the subject himself, it is possible not to cease in the enunciation of the need for change, emphasizing the urgency of developing, in each individual, emotional competences to face the situations in which he is immersed, without questioning the legitimacy of these situations.

As already highlighted by Pons (2008), one of the main roles of this type of psychologization precisely consists of enabling the preparation of a politically correct discourse that exonerates the constitutive fundamentals of the economic–political–social system, identifying those who are socially disadvantaged, such as victims of either a given malfunction, shortage, psychological dysfunction, or of a poor learning or socialization, or, in more extreme cases, but no less frequent, subjects who are not only responsible but also blamable of a *fate* they had sought by themselves—either consciously or not. What remains, out of the scope of any critical exam, are the structural conditions that set the internal framework from which the respective processes of subjectivation shall be developed, with the greatest possible success. This is where the *quid* of the subjectivation process lies, interpreted from emotional education: the goal is not to achieve traditional illustrated ideals, linked to the emancipation and attainment of legal age [*Mündigkeit*], and, in the end, to the autonomous and critical use of one's own capacity for understanding, against said presumably invariable determinations, capable of questioning its alleged natural-ness. It rather seeks to promote the creation of a sort of subjectivation in which all types of resistance are displaced from the critical opposition that defends the right to think and be—not just questioning what is already known but attempting to "get to understand how and to which degree it would be possible to think differently" (Foucault, 2003, p. 8), unlike the domesticated, calm exercise of adaptive (pseudo) resistance to secondary political–social adversities but, especially, to hardships considered *their own*.

4. DISCUSSION

As a matter of fact, the evaluation of the current dissemination and prominence of emotional education in the educational projects in general and curricula in partic-ular provides a set of elements to critically think about the present and question the apparent enforceability of things to be, and continue being, in a given way—and not others. Thus, curriculum innovations, based on the acritical promotion of certain seemingly unquestionable values—in this case, EI and the conceptual framework it brings along—translate into technologies that, through the legitimacy acquired as scientific laws and guarantors of progress, end up producing at least double the effects on the subjects to be trained. On the one hand, these are presented as regu-latory or penalizing discourses that, according to the *top–down* logic, are executed *from the top*, for the purposes of objectifying the subjects. Their way of action can

be characterized as coercive, restrictive modes of subjection that set, constrain, and chain subjects through the channeled deployment of a set of power relations geared toward establishing and consolidating a certain dominant relationship. On the other hand, according to what has been suggested by Michel Foucault's work, and particularly by his reflections on ethics, when present in practice as ways of establishing conditions of possibility for the subjects to think, judge, manage and dominate themselves, these are revealed, at least conditionally, as forms of influencing precisely what they presuppose—in other words, as forms of power not only exercised by another (abstract, social, symbolic, external, etc.) *over* one's everyday life and body but also as reflective practices, i.e., capable of considering themselves as objects, therefore going through life and the body itself, and finally becoming a possibility of their existence and transformation.

This double-faced character of subjectivation processes is, in turn, replicated in the Foucauldian reception of Enlightment [*Aufklärung*] and of the possibilities of breaking free from guardianships (authoritarian, doctrinaire, and dogmatic) of others and thus giving up the under-age status [*Unmündigkeit*], also translated as emancipation. In this sense, Foucault's attitude toward the Enlightenment Project, paraphrasing Francisco Vázquez (1993), cannot be limited to the exclusive binomial between rejection or continuation of illustrated rationality. Following Vazquez's reasoning,

> the subject is not a prefigured instance that should be disclosed through the phenomenological or critical monitoring of ideologies [Althusser's option, as could be added]. This is a space to build within a precise cultural context, which should be created as a nucleus of resistance and assertion (Vázquez, 1993, p. 144).

Specifically in the case of the processes of subjectivation in the field of education, this does not simply entail the denial of determinations (structural, historical, materials, etc.) that position the resulting subject, always transitory, preliminary, and fleeting, in its corresponding plexus of relationships. Rather, it critically takes over said subjectivating determinations in order to open the space for the deployment of strengths tending toward emancipation as the outlook resulting from their efforts. Said emancipation, in analogy to what is pointed out by the Foucauldian interpretation of Kant's text "In response to the question 'What is Enlightenment?" (2004), far from being a single, irreversible, and resulting act, is an attitude and movement. It is precisely about claiming and exercising the right to question the truth regarding its power effects, and vice versa, making up the knowledge-ability binomial, the power in terms of discourses of truth. Said emancipator sign, which always involves a certain display of the subject, some kind of getting out from the family, and safe territory, is closely related to the Foucauldian notion of "critique," emerging in the immediate vicinity of "the art of voluntary inservitude, of reflective indocility" (Foucault, 1995, p. 8). Paraphrasing Foucault, said emancipation would mainly serve as a de-subjection, in other words,

not only resistant (diametrical, reactive, and antagonistic) to subjection forces but also to the release or removal of (self)productive forces, constituting itself, in the game of what Foucault calls the "politics of truth." In that regard, as shown, for instance, by Silvana Vignale (2013), the critical review of the idea of (the art of) voluntary inservitude alongside that of reflective indocility opens up a possible way of thinking, outside the already beaten main paths, potential drifts of the problem of subjectivation that go beyond the traditional binomial solutions already shaped. Specifically, more than implementing universal emancipator programs, they are based on the problematization of the potential of the subjectivation modes, and their transformation with regard to a regulation, a standard, or a law, exploring to which extent and how far it is possible to implement certain practices that may be called "freedom practices." This way, resistance, (de)subjectivation and critique are brought together as a thread, toward an ethical-political axis that aims at emancipation, understood not as the unimpeded and unconditional release *of* power relationships and actual discourses (perhaps through the transcendence means) that define our historical context, but as the possibility for re-signifying and subverting those networks from the inside. The field of education, inasmuch as it is conceived as the transmission of specialized knowledge, learning of skills, values, beliefs and habits and, on the other hand, the development of an attitude, an *éthos* toward oneself, the other and the world, is a privileged place to diagnose, research and monitor these processes.

It is thus essential to bear in mind, in said place, the considerations made by Foucault in *The Birth of the Clinic* on how certain biopsychosocial practices constituted the body that the clinical view focuses on, through a set of onthological, epistemological, and technical changes that, by the beginning of the 19th century, translated into specific laws and assistance practices (Foucault, 2004). Once the close intertwining of the power relationships and body is uncovered, brought together by the concept of subjectivation, keeping and caring for a healthy body becomes the responsibility of the individuals and their families and, with regard to the problem that concerns us here, the above has to do with developing a regulated, malleable, and efficient body that not only integrates the values of emotional education but also practices them on a daily basis, by which it relates to other bodies.

For this reason, it is worth highlighting, just like Foucault did, that this does not involve fitting a set of practices into a rationality that would allow to appreciate them as forms of said rationality but rather "examining how these inscribe themselves in practices, or systems of practices, or ways of rationalizations, and what role they play within them" (Foucault, 1982, p. 66). In other words, although the rationality based on which certain specific measurements are justified in the field of education must be examined in pursuit of consistency and systematicity, these should not lead us to neglect the least visible effects, although more sustainable over time, which are generated when certain forms of rationality are part of given practices. Paraphrasing Moscoso-Flores (2011), pedagogy is perceived

as a completely fractured discourse, with gaps to be filled and indeterminations, where an affirmative functionality linked to the orders of a liberal rationality of the market is inscribed. That is to say, regardless the expected rational coherence of a specific discourse—as in the case of the educational discourse and, more specifically, of the discourse of emotions in education—it should not be ignored that it is precisely in its cracks and gaps where the articulated power is exercised with a different rationality. Consequently, it is necessary to *de-sediment* certain discourses and practices that have been developed and set as indisputable social phenomena within the neoliberal way of living and, from there, make a different criticism that allows for the reappropriation of the concept of subjectivation that involves not only a sporadic adjustment of the subject to the demands of the context—as in the case of the educational environment—but also other ways of subjectivation as an opening to other forms of existence (Oliverio, 2022).

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