FROM MODERN CHESS TO LIQUID GAMES: AN APPROACH BASED ON THE CULTURAL STUDIES FIELD TO STUDY THE MODERN AND THE POST-MODERN EDUCATION ON PUNCTUAL ELEMENTS

César Gonçalves Larcen[1]

Humberto Calloni[2]

Abstract

Here, I proceed a brief examination of some characteristics of modern chess game in comparison to the characteristics of (some other) contemporary computer games through an approach based on the Cultural Studies field to study the Modern and the Post-Modern Education that concerns to the changes from the society of discipline to the society of control. In order to guide my examination I bring mainly Bauman's thoughts about Ambivalence and Order and Alfredo Veiga-Neto's statements about Discipline and Control to take a closer look at the *so called modern and post modern individuals*' perceptions about Space and Time, as well Egon Carli Klein's research to make a short consideration about Strategy and Gambling Games.
Keywords: Chess, Real time strategy computer games, Cultural Studies, Modernity, Post-Modernity.

DO XADREZ MODERNO AOS JOGOS LÍQUIDOS: UMA ABORDAGEM COM BASE NO CAMPO DOS ESTUDOS CULTURAIS PARA ESTUDAR O MODERNO EO PÓS-MODERNA EDUCAÇÃO EM ELEMENTOS PONTUAL

Resumo

Aqui realizo uma breve análise sobre algumas características do xadrez moderno em relação às características apresentadas por (outros) jogos de computador contemporâneos através de uma abordagem com base no campo dos Estudos Culturais para estudar a Educação Moderna e Pós-Moderna no que diz respeito à transição da sociedade da disciplina para a sociedade do controle. Para guiar minhas análises trago principalmente os pensamentos de Bauman sobre Ambivalência e Ordem e as contribuições de Alfredo Veiga-Neto sobre Disciplina e Controle para lançar um olhar mais especificamente sobre as percepções de espaço e tempo pelos ditos indivíduos modernos e pós-modernos, bem como as pesquisas de Egon Carli Klein para tecer breves considerações acerca de jogos de estratégia e de azar.
Palavras-chave: Xadrez, Jogos de Computador de Estratégia em Tempo Real, Estudos Culturais, Modernidade, Pós-Modernidade.

[1] Mestrado em Educação pela Universidade Luterana do Brasil, Brasil(2010)
Analista de Sistemas da Companhia de Processamento de Dados do Rio Grande do Sul , Brasil.
clarcen2009@gmail.com

[2] Professor de Filosofia (FURG). Licenciado em Filosofia e Pedagogia (UFRGS). Mestre e Doutor em Educação (UFRGS). Membro do Conselho do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Ambiental. Professor da disciplina "Educação Ambiental e Complexidade"(PPGEA/FURG). Líder do Grupo de Estudo e Pesquisas da Complexidade CNPq/FURG. Tel. (53) 3232.2779 - End.: Rua General Câmara, 182/104 - Rio Grande - RS E-mail: hcalloni@mikrus.com.br

INTRODUCTION

Regarding Cultural Studies, we are used to hearing about the "postmodern ruptures from the modern models" and the "liquid modernity". Most discourses sound quite pessimistic or even much harder about the modernism than I allow myself to understand. A scene from the computer game called "Chessmaster 2000" [3] is one of the first images that come to my mind when I come across such discourses. I used to play "Chessmaster 2000" in the early 1990s and always enjoyed the battle scenes that this computer game was able to perform whenever a piece was about to be removed from the game. Other computer chess games at the same time were limited to replace a piece with the winner one at the same spot imitating the melancholy of the modern version of the chess game.

In my opinion, it seems that the harder speeches grant such a violent side to this rupture that they somehow bring to my mind all the truculence and violence I was used to witness whenever "Chessmaster 2000"'s pieces performed a little battle on the screen. On the other hand, we may find papers which employ analogies that use the concepts of liquidity in order to explain our contemporary society, though they are sometimes pessimistic, and papers which contemplate the modern solids' transformation into new ones. They sound less truculent and more reasonable, perhaps because we have been "collecting" cultural practices since the very beginning. Somehow we have been preserving some of them and at the same time some practices have been becoming not that usual, without mentioning some processes of hybridization.

I think that is why I feel more comfortable when I use the term "liquid modernity" than when I use the "postmodern" one. In other words, it is a reflection of the fact that the chess still survives and it is fine within its modern format represented by physical board and pieces, usually shaped in wood, as well it also looks fine represented in several ways as a computer game, including the traditional format with 32 (thirty-two)

[3] These game's matches take place on the computer screen where we can see the chess pieces arranged on the image of a traditional physical board. The chess pieces are animated and when one of them is about to remove and replace a piece of the opponent, both perform a brief battle and the piece to be replaced can be hit by the other, being reduced to shards that then disappear, or it can literally be eaten by the piece that must eliminate it from the board.

pieces and a square-checkered board with 64 (sixty-four) interspersed light and dark squares and arranged in an eight-by-eight grid.

The focus here is in the chess game, also known as "Western chess" or "International Chess" in order to tell it apart from its predecessors and other contemporary variations. In September 22nd, 2011, searching on the Internet for the word "xadrez" (“chess” in Portuguese) I found in the Wikipedia's pages that its current format emerged in Southwest Europe in the second half of the fifteenth century from its previous Persian or Indian formats.

Egon Klein Carli (2003, p.84) brings some detailed information about the history of chess game along the centuries from a time before Christ to at least the fifteenth century (SÉC.XV) in his diagram as shown below (**Fig.1**):

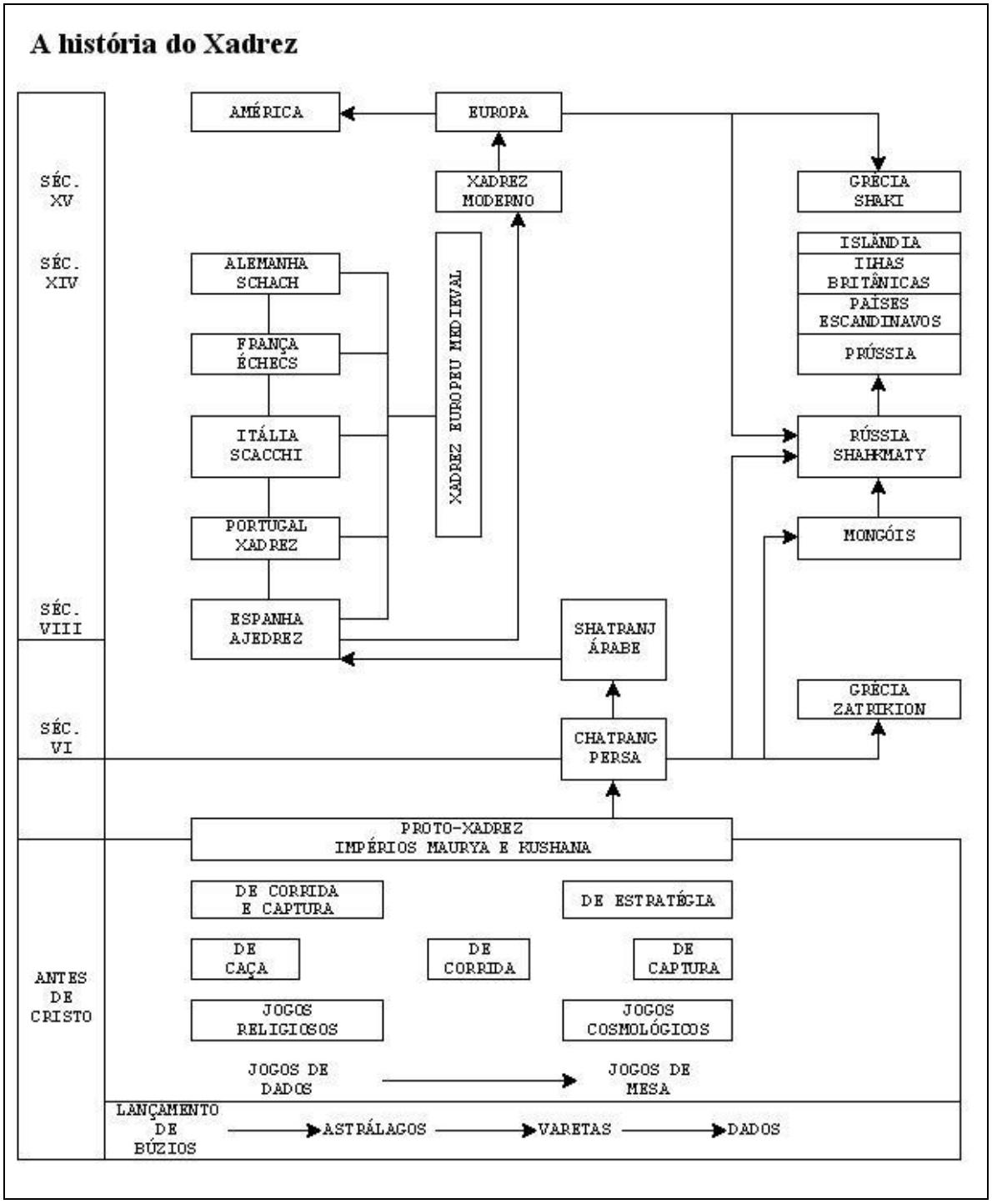

Fig.1.

I have been talking about chess until now but I need to bring some other elements to the scene I want to think about. And I like to think about it in this way, as David Morley (1998, p.93) says, "the postmodern can only be defined when it is compared to the

modern" [4]. In order to think about those features that constitute what we call modernism and those that constitute our contemporary practices, my attention now turns also to some other elements that have such recreational and competitive conceptions just like the chess game: real time strategy games. In this exercise I allow myself to think of chess as a modernism representation element and the real time strategy games as contemporary element also because they were developed at specific moments of our history but mainly due to their specific characteristics.

I mainly bring the chess game here alone as a modern element because the chess game all alone allows me to identify in "(playing) it" characteristics usually associated to modernism. Besides, most of its rules updatings took place after the beginning of the fifteenth century (Klein, 2003, p.62 -71), mainly those updates which allowed the game to become the way it is nowadays such as those that grant specific "powers" to the pieces in what it concerns to the way they are allowed to move along the board.

Real time strategy games are brought into this scene by me as videogames and computer games and "apparently" in a greater number because they look very much alike in what concerns to the characteristics I am interested in investigating as being part of our contemporary or "liquid modernity".

So they are brought here in greater number because, in my opinion, computer real time strategy games present so few variations among each game's rules. I mean, if we could turn all of them into the chess game's "world", I think those rules variations would mainly concern to granting a pawn the power to capture enemy pieces which are at a square ahead in its same line instead of capturing those which may be diagonally in front of it on an adjacent file or to suppressing the possibility of playing the "castling" movement. Something similar happens to the chess game itself when little variations such as those that are already applied to the pieces' design. For instance, when design variations are appllied to the pieces it does not mean we will not be able to realize that two players are in fact playing a chess just because the pieces look like the characters of Star Wars movies or from Alice's Wonderland, among other chess sets' configurations (http://nerdenterprise.blogspot.com/2011/04/os-jogos-de-xadrez-mais-legais-do-mundo.html). On the other hand, the real time stragey games takes place at several

[4] Translation done by me from the text: "lo posmoderno solo puede ser definido em relación com lo moderno." (MORLEY, 1998, p.93)

locations in space and time, mainly settled in war scenes, during the Second World, Vietnam or Gulf War, among some other backgrounds outer space or inside new dimensions.

A little different from what happens in the traditional chess games environments, the main idea of the real time computer strategy games I am talking about is to offer to the player, in real time, an environment where the characters or pieces he has got under his command may interact with each other and with other players' or teams' pieces and even with objects or with the scenario itself where the story of the game takes place. I hope these essentially comparative exercises of reflection here may bring to the light some new elements that will help somehow to build future considerations.

AMBIVALENCE AND ORDER

I think that the conflict which concerns the simultaneous contemporary existence of modern elements with post-modern ones is also related to the to the fact that modern individuals are stuck in such a dualistic logic as well as in a logic that drives us to constantly classify elements just like Zygmunt Bauman (1999, p.9 -24) showed in "The Quest for Order". These individuals could abandon this logic in order to use new features and facilities that are offered by the highest advanced technology achieved in one or another field but they do not abandon it, not even when they are allowed and/or encouraged to.

Talking about the "quest for order" and what concerns to new ways to perceive things in the fields of digital technologies, Google's products, for instance, have been using the philosophy of cooperation among users as well as technology integration and practices that some experts of the computing fields link to the "new generation of the Internet". Among these products we can find Google Calendar, Google Docs and the webmail Gmail.

Google's webmail invites the user to search instead of classifying, and it looks like an invitation straightly addressed to the old fashion webmail users. While more traditional webmails keep allowing their users to classify and rank their emails in the most modern of the styles ("this one belongs and goes to this group, that one belongs and goes to that other folder"), Gmail also offers something similar by allowing the user to mark emails

with some specific tags created by the user himself but, on the other hand, it keeps inviting the user of its Portuguese version to search by showing a message that invites the user “not to classify, but to search” on its entrance screen as shown below (Fig.2):

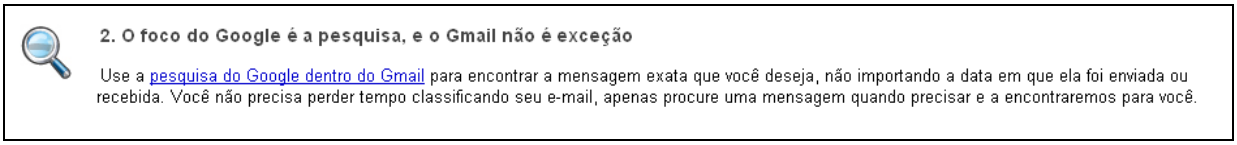

Fig.2.

Bringing the focus back to the chess game, it seems to me that the ambivalence[5] is somehow supressed by the major instution of the order as long as: 1) the game is played by just two teams of pieces or armies; 2) each player is conditioned to have its own side on the board; 3) the white pieces are and will always be the white pieces (at least along the match); and 4) the number of pieces for a match is finite among other substantially modern characteristics.

The contemporary games I am bringing here do not supress the modern order: they “liquify” it. In a single match played by more than two players at the same time, they allow two or more players to ally to each other in a team in order to defeat another player or another team of players. In the scenery opened at the computers’ screens there are no sides where a player should stay at. Usually, the players can take any free area to "build" their cities and empires where they can place an infinite (as long as the software and hardware are able to manage) number of units or characters (military and civilian) even when the user is limited to a maximum number of characters arranged all over the "scenario" at the same time because they may be allowed to generate as much units as they need or want to along the match in order to replace the war casualties with new members

[5] A ambivalência é um subproduto do trabalho de classificação e convida a um maior esforço classificatório. Embora nascida do impulso de nomear/classificar, a ambivalência só pode ser combatida com uma nomeação ainda mais exata e classes definidas de modo mais preciso ainda: isto é, com operações tais que farão demandas ainda mais exigentes (contrafactuais) à descontinuidade e transparência do mundo e assim darão ainda mais lugar à ambiguidade. A luta contra a ambivalência é, portanto, tanto autodestrutiva quanto autopropulsora. Ela prossegue com força incessante porque cria seus próprios problemas enquanto os resolve. Sua intensidade, porém, varia com o tempo, dependendo da disponibilidade de força adequada à tarefa de controlar o volume de ambivalência existente e também da presença ou ausência de consciência de que a redução da ambivalência é uma questão de descobrir e aplicar a tecnologia adequada – uma questão administrativa. Os dois fatores combinaram-se para fazer dos tempos modernos uma era de guerra particularmente dolorosa e implacável contra a ambivalência. (BAUMAN, 1999, p.11)

that belong to of any sort of species or category (infantry, cavalry, farmer, priest, mage, Minotaur, Cyclops, mining unit or even vehicles or crafts). For instance, some games allow that units from the blue team may be converted to the red team by a priest. Other games allow the red player to summon a spy among the units of the blue team if a specific “supernatural power” is acquired along the match, and the spy would act as if he were commanded by the blue player whose acts and fields he is in charge of spying on.

The immutable, permanent and finite scenery of the chess’ boards allow the player, at his turn as we shall see, to exercise patiently the finite possibilities to move his own pieces and those allowed to his opponent’s ones "a few turns ahead”. These conditions allow him much more. They allow him to develop such a quite safe and typically modern project of the future, predicting his own actions and those his army will proceed with. For me it looks like that a "Comenian project" is in process just like the one I can see through Mariano Narodowski’s (2001) words describing the contributions of Comenius to our modern educational system and as well they showed me such a project[6] carefully designed and prepared in details as described in the "The Great Didactic" book. This project was very well "elaborated" in a way that its author had not gotten the chance to put it into practice while he was alive, but nowadays we can perceive its inheritance in our current school’s elements and practices.

Those players who play real time computer strategy games face a scenario where the configuration possibilities seem to be endless. The scenery seems to be under any substantial changes as long as it concerns to climate, vegetation and landforms that can be (in some games) started or operated by the players themselves on their will in order to fit their strategies. The absence of turns in which each player proceeds with a move alternately allows not much time for the players to plan the future of their armies in a long term. That is how real time interaction matches take place: while one player thinks about what to do the other one’s army is able to act continuously and relentlessly.

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[6] Podemos dizer que a existência é moderna na medida em que é produzida e sustentada pelo *projeto*, manipulação, *administração*, *planejamento*. A existência é moderna na medida em que é administrada por agentes capazes (isto é, que possuem conhecimento, habilidade e tecnologia) e soberanos. Os agentes são soberanos na medida em que reinvidicam e defendem com sucesso o direito de gerenciar e administrar a existência: o direito de definir a ordem e, por conseguinte, por de lado o caos como refúgio que escapa à definição. (BAUMAN, 1999, p.15, grifos do autor)

TIME PERCEPTION

The idea of real time here means that the actions performed during the game in a match do not happen in turns as we can perceive in a chess match that takes place in a traditional board as physical as the pieces on it. Traditionally, chess match takes place in turns: one player starts the game moving one of his pieces and then he waits until the other one moves another piece of his own. And so on, each player in its turn, turn after turn obeying specific rules that apply to each and every piece's movement as well to the the game's goals. Chess ended up being designed in its latest format and rules, as one can say, in a time when the relationship between time itself and space began to be "interpreted" by the modernity through the human's wit and capacity. Bauman (2001)[7] says that the Modernity begins when space and time are separated from the practice of life and from each other, so they can be theorized as mutually independent and distinct categories of strategy and action.

In real time computer strategy games, the pieces or units that belong to one of the players interact with the pieces that belong to another player (the computer itself or even a team of other players) or players (if it is allowed by the technology used to develop the game). The pieces also may "use" (hit, throw, ride…) other pieces (from the same team or not) within pre-established rules. Normally the game itself or the midia devices it is attatched to are able to make sure that those rules are going to be followed anyhow. Differently from what happens in a traditional board game where a player can eventually break them when the other one is not paying attention to what is going on while he moves two pieces in a single turn of his or while he places a piece of his own in a better position or square on the board where it would not be allowed to be placed on at that specific turn according to predefined rules.

[7] A modernidade começa quando o espaço e o tempo são separados da prática da vida e entre si, e assim podem ser teorizados como categorias distintas e mutuamente independentes da estratégia e da ação; quando deixam de ser, como eram ao longo dos séculos pré-modernos, aspectos entrelaçados e dificilmente distinguíveis da experiência vivida, presos numa estável e aparentemente invulnerável correspondência biunívoca. Na modernidade, o tempo tem história, tem história por causa de sua "capacidade de carga", perpetuamente em expansão - o alongamento dos trechos do espaço que unidades de tempo permitem "passar", "atravessar", "cobrir" - ou conquistar. (p.15)

Talking about "postmodernity" and ways by which we can perceive the time, we are not limited to consider just the turn by turn interactions in order to verify the concepts concerning to real time interactions and to the possibilities and situations they launch out or by which they are launched out. In this case it is worth mentioning the possibility of simultaneity not only regarding to players who are allowed to move such as many pieces and units whenever they want (even just at the same time as the other ones) all over the scenery just like bending or breaking all the previous senses of order. Simultaneity may also be found at sincronous online contacts when an individual or user can watch a scene or situation that results from real time actions (or almost, regarding to the limitations of the used technology), both his and those performed by another player, players or teams of players, no matter how physically far away they are from each other or wherever on Earth each of them is.

It seems that the long effort to speed up the movement has reached its "natural limit". The power can move with the speed of the electronic signal - and thus the time required for the movement of its essential ingredients is reduced to instantaneity. Bauman (2001, p.17-18)[8] says it no longer matters where the one who gives the order is - the difference between "near" and "distant", or between the wild and the civilized, is about to disappear.

When I think about simultaneity this way it looks like that simultaneity itself does not refer only to a specific moment or amount of time taken for a certain action to be performed. But it also refers somehow about how far the individual who performs the action can be from the one or those who "even in real time" suffer the effects of such action. Anyways, to think about simultaneity it also means to think about discipline and control (remote control, to be more specific) as much as about space and time.

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[8] O que leva tantos a falar do ”fim da história”, da pós-modernidade, da “segunda modernidade” e da “sobremodernidade”, ou a articular a intuição de uma mudança radical no arranjo do convívio humano e nas condições sociais sob as quais a política-vida é hoje levada, é o fato de que o longo esforço para acelerar a velocidade do movimento chegou a seu “limite natural”. O poder pode se mover com a velocidade do sinal eletrônico - e assim o tempo requerido para o movimento de seus ingredientes essenciais se reduziu à instantaneidade. Em termos práticos, o poder se tornou verdadeiramente *extraterritorial*, não mais limitado, nem mesmo desacelerado, pela resistência do espaço (o advento do telefone celular serve bem como “golpe de misericórdia” simbólico na dependência em relação ao espaço: o próprio acesso a um ponto telefônico não é mais necessário para que uma ordem seja dada e cumprida. Não importa mais onde está quem dá a ordem - a diferença entre “próximo” e “distante”, ou entre o espaço selvagem e o civilizado e ordenado, está a ponto de desaparecer). (p.17-18)

SPACE PERCEPTION, DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL

I do not want to practice philosophical exercises here such as calculating how long it was the distance traveled by the white army's knight when it was advancing against a black army's bishop in a chess match that is being played through the Internet. Not even if this philosophical exercise required us to consider that the knight was commanded by a player who was comfortably installed in his living room in Sao Paulo and that the whole army formed by black units was commanded by an explorer through his laptop's Internet connection while he was enjoying his resting shift inside that ice-breaking boat where the whole crew of researchers were sailing the frozen seas of the Arctic towards to the harsh target of their scientific activities.

Regarding to the ways we can perceive space, conventional board games only allow the player to participate in the game as "third person", just as an observer who watches the action performed by his units. Some computer games allow the action to be performed as "first person", allowing the player to "embody" a character allegedly watching at the unit's actions from the same angle of view that we are used to watch our own actions while we perform our every single day activities. Living our lives in "first person mode" (as if we could say it this way), we usually see our hands and sometimes the arms, the legs, the feet and part of the chest... and that is not what happens when we look at another person while he or she is performing an activity, in this case we can see his or her face and even his or her entire body. We can say that some children play with their toys as in third person mode when they play with a doll or when they "drive" tiny cars. Even if we consider that they "project" themselves as the doll itself or into the cars, "living" the action, it still looks like they are experiencing it "as third person".

That could be enough, I guess, but we can try another little exercise. The view we see when we look at the board looks like an open version of the Panopticon (Fig.3) in which the player, in my opinion, has the opportunity to "feel" some kind of power (similar to the one that is provided by the logic of discipline) over the pieces placed there, both his and his opponent's. None of my pieces dare to move without my permission or command, and whenever any of the pieces move I am allowed to instantly (or simulotaneously) know it through a visual contact in regular playing conditions.

That is why we have lots of possibilities when we consider real time strategy computer games and situations like that. These situations make it difficult for players to focus their eyes and attention on a whole map (and its scenarios) as it usually corresponds to a lot of chess boards, side by side, in total area if we consider the proportion of each area to the pieces' dimensions in such environments. Even if we consider such technologies that allow the pieces to hide themselves behind buildings, trees and walls, mixing their "bodies' appearance" with the scenario's elements such as mountains and bushes which the armies march by (scenarios that look like real as announced by the games developers or even that seem much more than real, hyperreal or just surreal where "impressive and accurate" physical behaviors take place in what concerns to explosions, collisions, falls, acceleration of elements due to gravity, air resistance and so on).

Comparing the contemporary society to the modern school in a specific context, Alfredo Veiga-Neto (2006) says that the first:

> [...] seems to follow a new course and is turning into a society of control. It does not mean that the discipline is being replaced by the control, but nowadays the logic of control is already much more important than the logic of the discipline. (p.111) [9]

As a matter of fact, the post-Panopticon [10] information technology age unfolds the possibility that so many forms of control can be practiced and exercised by or even against the contemporary individual disciplined by the "yet modern" school. Concerning to real time strategy computer games, the player's pieces or units can be monitored by visual radar or sound devices. Sometimes we can also monitor the enemy's units after specifc devices become available to each player or team. Such games also allow

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[9] Translation done by me from the text: "rapidamente parece seguir um novo rumo e está se tornando uma sociedade de controle. Isso não significa dizer que o controle está substituindo a disciplina, mas sim que hoje a lógica do controle já é bem mais importante do que a lógica da disciplina." (VEIGA-NETO, 2006, p.111)

[10] The Wikipedia Page about Panopticon says (2011):

The Panopticon is a type of building designed by English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century. The concept of the design is to allow an observer to observe (-opticon) all (pan-) inmates of an institution without them being able to tell whether or not they are being watched. The design comprises a circular structure with an "inspection house" at its centre, from which the managers or staff of the institution are able to watch the inmates, who are stationed around the perimeter. Bentham conceived the basic plan as being equally applicable to hospitals, schools, poorhouses, and madhouses, but he devoted most of his efforts to developing a design for a Panopticon prison, and it is his prison which is most widely understood by the term.

Bentham himself described the Panopticon as "a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example."

the player or user to program actions, activities or tasks to be done by a group of pieces (military or civillian ones) or just by a specific one, and they can be set up to be done once or several times, as many as possible or one after the other in a specific frequence. The player can monitore these activities as well reprogram, suspend or cancel them at any time even if they are being effectively happening.

These games' technology also brings to the player the possibility of managing empires and countries no matter if they are in a war or peace scenario, their natural and/or manufactured resources not only about the amount of goods and their destination as the game goes by. If the game's technology permits, after the end of the game or even along the match, the player can get information about which goods were produced along the match and specifically when as well he may know who produced what, who bought what or who (that's right, "who": units, resources or even other players), how much money or gold was spent, how many enemies or buildings were eliminated by each player or team and how the nature was devasted or not and as about how they depleted or not the natural resources of the scenery. Some games' units have their own first and last names and they can be upgraded, promoted or gain experience in combat. That allows the units to be designated for specific tasks by the player as it best suits his strategy or in the absence of one previously planned. Those are technological devices that can be enabled or disabled by the player or configured by a team before or during the match and at certain cases each technology or group of needs a previous agreement with the opponents to be set as an option.

The control that can be exercised during the match can also be exercised after its end, as the match can be recorded and watched as a movie later (not only through the angles the user saw while he was playing but also from any possible angle he desires to see the scenes whenever he wants in the future). Sometimes a specific match can be resumed from any point as it is also recorded for such purpose. This tecnology allows the player to analise the strengths and weaknesses of its own strategies as well as his opponents' ones, but it also allows the players to reprehend the members of the team that failed during the match in a specific situtation that no one perceived while they were playing.

However, it is important to remember that there is no guarantee that all of this logic that concerns to control is infallible. Some control features or devices can not work as they are expected to, due to a lack of physical components or software, failure of product implementation or even due to pre-programmed situations as they may become a victim of

an opposing technology that is superior or just more efficient. At this point, it is interesting to mention Bauman's (2001) lines again [11] as it no longer matters where the one who gives the order is. In other words, the one who gives the order can get rid of the annoying aspects of the Panopticon power technique.

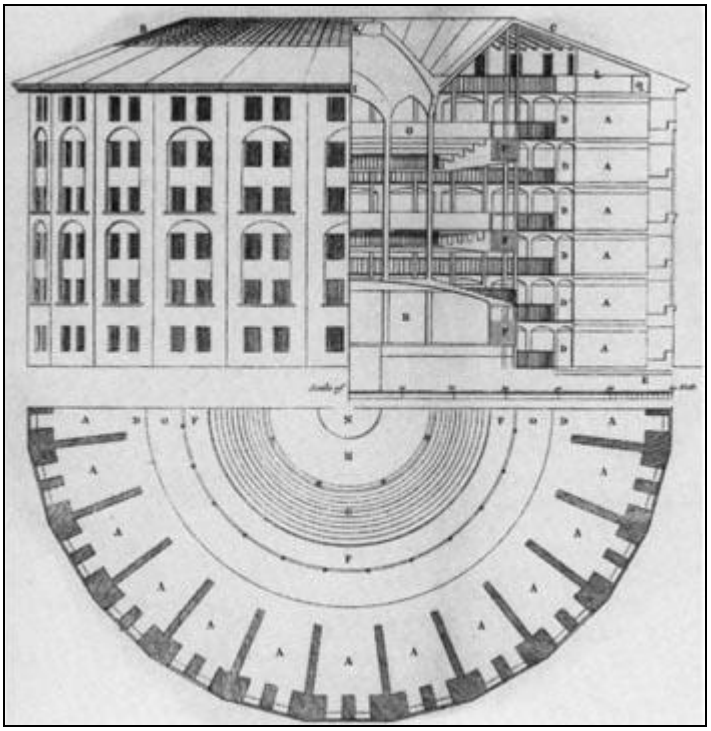

Fig.3.

STRATEGY AND GAMBLING GAMES

The previsibility and some characteristics (more specifically related to the order) that are present in the chess game make it a strategy game as well due to that it is not a gambling game. However, Klein (2003) shows a specific pre-modern episode in its

[11] Não importa mais onde está quem dá a ordem (...) Isso dá aos detentores do poder uma oportunidade verdadeiramente sem precedentes: eles podem se livrar dos aspectos irritantes e atrasados da técnica de poder do Panóptico. O que quer que a história da modernidade seja no estágio presente, ela também, e talvez acima de tudo, *pós-Panóptica*. O que importava no Panóptico era que os encarregados "estivessem lá", próximos, na torre de controle. O que importa, nas relações de poder pós-panópticas é que as pessoas que operam as alavancas do poder de que depende o destino dos parceiros menos voláteis na relação podem fugir do alcance a qualquer momento - para a pura inacessibilidade. (p.18, grifos do autor)

history when it could not be considered as an strategy and intelectual game at all in the Middle Ages:

> As some chess matches could take a long time to be finished, some impatient players returned to the use of dice to indicate the piece that should be moved, taking the game back to the condition of a chance-game. (p.60)[12]

That is why real time computer strategy games matches (that can potentially be classified as postmodern games) may also depend on the luck of the players, since the scenario may not be as good to an army in several ways as it may be to the others in a specific match, placing one army too far from the resources it needs or on a rough territory that is a little or much more inhospitable than the one set to its opponent. Other computer games also allow opponents to select armies substantially different from each other in what concerns to their weapons' technology or to any other characteristics such as the civilization they belong to (Roman, Norse or Egyptians, depending on the game itself). On the other hand, these games may apparently require more skills from the players in a match in which they have to search and occupy strategic territories and resources before the opponent can do it in order to avoid investing over territories already occupied by another player. All these efforts and each success or failure (or the sum of them at all) in a specific match may soon (or not ...) define the results based on the players' skills in managing both time and space of the scenario as it is not a turn-after-turn game.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Talking about order and ambivalence, the logics of discipline and control and the perception of time and space, it seems that even if we characterize them more or less intensely to modernism or postmodernism, to post-panoptic or panoptic individuals or to forms of power that can be exercised in a given society at a given time. I also think it is difficult to divide the human history into periods that can be considered as homogeneous as if we could be able to distinguish them as heterogeneous periods when we compare them

[12] Translation done by me from the text: "A demora no desenrolar de uma partida, fez com que jogadores impacientes voltassem a usar os dados para indicar a peça a ser movida, passando novamente o xadrez à condição de jogo de azar." (KLEIN, 2003, p.60)

with any other period. A hypothetical rupture of postmodernism from modernism does not seem to be an idea so obvious or even “natural”. I think the same about any other rupture of any period from another one that is supposed to precede it. However, for didactic purposes, I must admit that these rupturing ideas have their advantages as a "so modern classification procedure".

In a classification effort to assign modern features to the chess game and post-modern features to real time strategy computer games, we could avoid it thinking that what we supposedly classificate as modern and what we supposedly classificate as postmodern coexist. But I really think that the concept of "liquid modernity" seems to better reflect our contemporary condition. I refer here to a characteristical "blurring of boundaries" sometimes assigned to the contemporaneity. I mean, the modern chess is right here existing among (other) computer games and somehow directly or indirectly inspiring the development of computer games.

It does not seem to me more likely that “individuals that look typically post-modern” live “essentially post-modern experiences” and that “essencially look-alike modern individuals” live “essentially modern experiences”. This so called "blurring of boundaries" allows us to think the contemporary world from some new perspectives. I propose below an exercise in which we may try to liquefy the "order fo the modern chess game” without changing its most traditional physical forms and shape as well granting them new possibilities of considerable ambivalent applicability, in my opinion.

Perhaps more important than learning the rules of a game is knowing how to use them in your favor. That is why I think we can try several configurations to set the pieces on the board to start a match up, in order to try something different from the same old stablished model without inventing a whole new game which rules we should teach to someone else who would agree to play. It is like to start the same game from a specific point or situation that is not the one from the very beginning we already know or recognize by the pieces disposition. In this sense, it could not be necessary to use the modern configuration which determines black pieces armies against white ones. We could not limit ourselves to have armies of similar or identical number of pieces and/or form. Maybe we could play a match in which an army of bishops would play against an army of knights. Or in which we would place just eight pawns for each player on the conventional board, previously combining with the opponent if they should behave effectively as the pawns they are or all

like queens. Why not? Since the players have a previous agreement for the match as an exercise, they may be able to combine where on the board their pieces are going to be placed. We are not trying to reinvent the game itself or even “destroying” it as the game it is and will still be, but we somehow try new possibilities for the same pieces and board as a reflection. It is not usual to hear about strategies developed to save a knight ambushed by three bishops.

And now I am talking more specifically about order and ambivalence not to mention some other approaches I have already mentioned here such as Time and Space Perceptions, Discipline and Control. In what concerns to modernism and post-modernism I may highlight it that the chess’ rules already allow the pawn to assume the identity of any other piece whenever it reaches the opposite end of the board from the one it was near at the beginning of the match. Maybe it is a post-modern feature already incorporated in the modern version of the game. But I think that the so called “blurring of boundaries” effect that we may find multiple identities is another matter for another paper.

Finally, I think it is interesting to notice that its pieces and board as the chess game itself still keep both its nowadays format and goals very similar to those consolidated in the modernity, invoking a monarchical society in which the "death" of the sovereign implies that the whole empire or kingdon must come down together even if all other pieces of that "state" still remain standing. Although we may find new formats and goals in the contemporaneity and despite the historical twists in the game of power as presented by Ghiraldelli (2003, p.99-102) while he talks about Nietzsche’s vision concerning to the nihilism and to the interactions between wolves and sheep throughout modern history. Perhaps the wolves and sheep are no longer the same or even remained as such for a "could be long time", but the modern view still remains somehow intact in the chess game and in some of the contemporary video and computer games. Even if we consider the seemalike chaos that is perceived in the age of the logic of control when the industry of entertainment produces real time multiplayer strategy games for the delight of the “liquid society”.

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FIGURES

Fig.1.

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Fig.2.

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Fig.3.

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