

SUMMARY

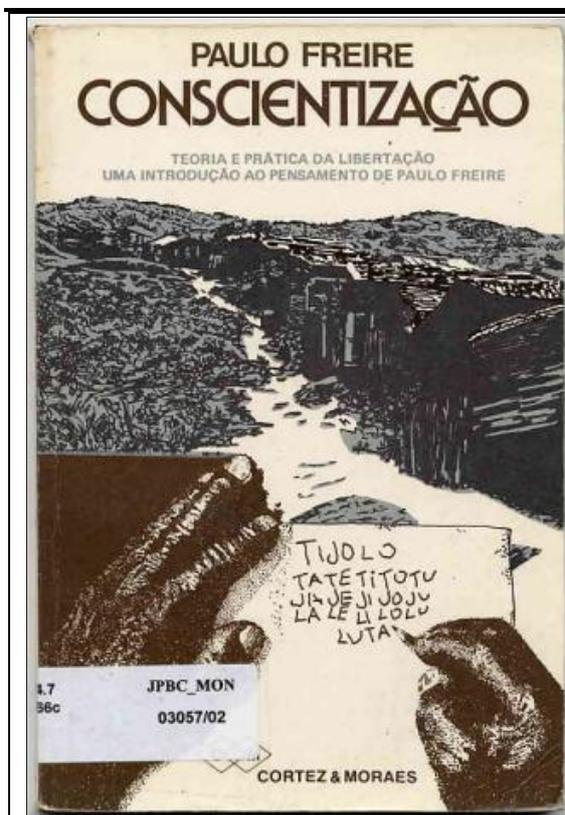
FREIRE, Paulo. *Awareness: theory and practice of liberty: one introduction to Paulo Freire's thought*. São Paulo: Cortez & Moraes, 1979. 53 pages.

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Paulo Freire's book *Conscientização*, written in 1979, treats of the liberty and liberation thematic.

The education as a liberator tool, is able to make the subject aware of his/her oppressive and marginalized reality. it's necessary to reflect about the necessary advances in education for the construction of an emancipatory education.

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Men are aware that they are incomplete, and thus, in this being unfinished and in the awareness they have of this, lie the very education roots as a purely human phenomenon. (FREIRE, 1979, p. 42.)

The work ***Conscientization: theory and practice of liberation: an introduction Paulo Freire's thought***, was originally written in 1979, totaling 53 pages. Organized into three parts called Man and his experience; Literacy and Awareness and Praxis of Liberation.

In the presentation, Cecílio de Lora, Director of the Educational Publications Association, talks about Freire's contributions to the awareness of knowledge and educational methodologies. The Prologue prepared by the INODEP Team (Instituto Oecuménique au Service du Développement des Peuples) gives a brief presentation of the parts that make up the book, highlighting that initially the author brings his story, then deals with the method and application and, finally, deals with about the practice of liberation.

The work in its first part, Man and his experience, Paulo Freire by himself, presents the author's biography. Freire was born in Recife, on September 19, 1921. His parents Joaquim Temístocles Freire and his mother, Edeltrudes Neves Freire, taught him from an early age the importance of dialogue in human relationships. "Although I was a child, I started asking myself what I could do to help men". (FREIRE, 1979, p. 9). This shows that even in the face of losses, difficulties and the harsh realities of life, Freire began to reflect on how he could help others. At the age of 15 he entered high school with the intention of deepening his studies until he became a high school teacher and later a lawyer at the Federal University of Pernambuco. Professionally, Paulo Freire worked in Pernambuco in the Social Assistance Service department – SESI and later at the Superintendency of SESI. Through these, the then Cultural Extension Service of the Superintendency of SESI. Through these, the then Cultural Extension Service of the University of Recife emerged, of which Freire was the first director. At the age of 23 he married Elza Maia Costa Oliveira, with whom he had five children.

With the coup d'état in 1964, Freire was arrested for around 70 days, as they considered his educational methods contrary to the political issues of the time. Freire's persecution by conservative groups was a consequence of a movement started by the author in 1962, in which 300 workers were taught literacy in just 45 days in Angicos, Rio Grande do Norte, which according to the author is the poorest region in Brazil, resulting in a decrease of illiteracy rates and awakening educators' eyes towards new educational perspectives. Thus, the assumption of Paulo Freire's exile was based on this movement, as it defended a free literate population, man becoming the subject of his own history, hence "... students trained in circles [...], see more clearly the difference

between the promises made to the masses and their fulfilment.” (FREIRE, 1979, p. 12). In this context, politicians were not interested in the masses, only in manipulating them in the electoral game.

Exiled in Chile, Paulo Freire’s method reduced illiteracy to 5% in six Years. In 1965, the Planning Office for Adult Education was created by Waldoms Cortês in Santiago. In 1967, the method, until then considered subversive in Brazil, was successful in Chile, allowing recognition from UNESCO, which granted it the title of one of the five nations which achieved the best overcoming of illiteracy in the 1960s.

During his exile in Chile, in 1964, Paulo Freire was invited to contribute with his pedagogical experience, until then in Brazil. This feasibility was possible since the Christian Democratic party began its administration in the country and envisioned a government program for adult education. Given this, the creation of the Planning Office for Adult Education, by Waldoms Cortês, in 1965, agreed with Freire the practical development of an appropriate methodology for this purpose. Consequently, Paulo Freire enjoyed the favorable scenario for realizing his political, pedagogical and methodological ideals, until then considered subversive in Brazil, by structuring adult education through the literacy process. This action helped reduce illiteracy by 5% in six years. That being said, in 1967, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO, awarded Chile the title of one of the five nations that achieved the best overcoming of illiteracy in the 1960s.

The next part of the work described Literacy and Awareness, addresses the term “awareness” based on Freire’s methodology, which emphasizes that education is a reflection of awareness resulting from the critical analysis of reality. This discussion is divided into two perspectives: non-critical, critical and analytical, in which the understanding of reality is obtained by distancing itself from the object for a better view. In this process, the initial analysis of reality is broken, allowing the individual to position themselves in front of it. Thus, awareness arises from the interaction between reality and reflective action.

In the process of awareness, a new concept is reached, utopia. Freire explains that great thinkers like Marx and Guevara were utopians, as they proposed the transformation of the world, based on the hope that man can achieve something even better as a permanent task of transformation.

The more aware we are of our reality, the more capable we become of committing ourselves as heralds of transformation. In this context, man, through liberating actions, promotes a change in the “status quo”. In this logic, the awareness process enables critical- reflective analysis of reality, contributing to and in the necessary formation for

the transformation action, that is, the emancipation of man. Therefore, the change in the “status quo” comes from liberating actions of man as an active subject, aware of his historical and social process.

In this way, it is possible to understand the individuals’ change in the face of reality since this is not their true aspect, therefore becoming a challenge that needs to be rethought. Learners and educators can now reflect together critically on real knowledge in context, relationships that were previously not perceived. At all stages of decoding, men reveal their vision of the world. Depending on the way they see the world and how they approach it—fatalistically, statically or dynamically” (FREIRE, 1979, p. 18). Human and reflective thinking about reality results in greater awareness about their environment, in addition to allowing man the ability to modify this reality.

In this context, the author presents a new terminology called “force ideas” which are endowed with a critical- reflexive character. The first is based on the reflection that education develops in man the ability to analyze and reflect on his life context considering the conditions in which he lives. The next thought refers to the questioning of human beings about the routine in which they live. Thus, the more aware he is of his role in society, the more committed he becomes to intervening and modifying this reality. Freire also highlights the driving idea in which human beings, after reflecting on their context, see themselves as subjects of their own reality. From this, the fourth reasoning listed by the author is established, in which man energizes the world, becoming the author and builder of his own history, thus developing the desire for culture. It then reflects on the recognition and discovery, by human beings, of their own existence and whether they are able to construct their historical era and their own reality. The last main idea advocates liberating and authentic education as an instrument to combat domesticating attitudes and practices.

In the part that deals with the Methodological Process, Freire uses a more empirical approach. The methodology is based on literacy techniques that differ from traditional techniques, recommending that the method must take into account the student's experience and history. In this logic, the author proposes that the educator abandon the memorization technique and invest in visualizing the generating word, that is, establishing an association between the object and the word to which it refers. “Taking on this mechanism critically and not through memorization [...], the illiterate begins to establish his system of graphic signs for himself” (FREIRE, 1979, p. 24). This way, the division of syllables and the recognition of phonetic families develops in the student the ability to form new words through the mechanism of phonemic combinations. In short,

the student, until then illiterate, perceives himself as a person of value. This situation results, for example, in a certain appreciation of his/her work and his/her surroundings, regardless of his/her profession.

Called Praxis of Liberation, the ending of the work addresses oppression. To do this, three keywords are used. The first of them is “Oppression”, which Freire describes how the oppressed individual is individualistic due to his identification as an oppressed being. “The shadow of their former oppressor is continually projected over them” (FREIRE, 1979, p. 31). When the oppressed has the possibility of advancement, their attitude towards others tends to become the figure of the oppressor himself.

So, for a liberating attitude, the oppressor needs to combat and resolve his contradiction in being trapped in the former human being, because as heirs of oppression they carry its origins and variations or specificities. Therefore, “the oppressed can free their oppressors by freeing themselves” (FREIRE, 1979, p. 32). In this context, the author reports that the conversion into a new man requires a profound resurrection, where once we cannot remain as we were. In this perspective, the oppressed are emotionally dependent, which leads the author to discuss the next keyword, “Dependence”.

Paulo Freire reveals the situation of underdeveloped countries charged with the task of breaking with the limiting beliefs imposed on them, dealing with “the Relational Phenomenon of Dependence from the Latin American case”. It presents the historical-cultural reality, called “culture of silence”, the effect of relationships between dominators and dominated. The author finds that the underdeveloped society absorbs values and lifestyles typical of the society that holds power. This society, which in turn, manages to manipulate the underdeveloped community through dependence and its respective ideological apparatuses. At this point, Freire highlights that “the dependent society is, by definition, a silent society. His voice is not an authentic voice, but a simple echo of the metropolis voice” (FREIRE, 1979, p. 34). This reveals that in the mobilization of the masses, the dominated acquire a critical look at their historical and social reality, causing changes and transformations. According to the author, this transition period triggers the revolution or coup d'état, which in Brazil was marked by the Military Coup of 1964.

Regarding the third keyword, Freire brings a new term “marginalization”, referring to the excluded man from the social system. We cannot attribute to the illiterate the position of marginalized, considering that marginal is something that is “on the margins of”, a vision of movement between center and periphery. The expression ‘marginalized’ is not identified with literacy, as the illiterate becomes free precisely because he is not marginalized, but rather as an oppressed being in society. In that regard,

Accepting that the illiterate is a person who exists on the margins of Society, we are led to consider him as a kind of “sick man”, for whom literacy would be a “curative” medicine, which would allow him to “return” to the structure “healthy” from which he had been separated. (FREIRE, 1979, p. 39).

Furthermore, the author discusses the lines of action and the new educational relationship and states that pedagogy develops from the dominant classes, as they incorporate that everything that has more power is legitimate. However, a dual system is evident, dominant versus dominated, that is, an educational perspective based on the banking and cumulative conception, that is, education as an act of depositing knowledge. As the author defines when discussing the subject “Instead of communicating, the teacher gives statements that students patiently receive, learn and repeat. It is the “accumulative” conception of education (banking conception)” (FREIRE, 1979, p. 41).

Freire proposes a transformation of the educator, based on engagement in favor of the student’s progress and the development of critical thinking, through dialogue, a resource peculiar to the act of teaching, the core of the transformative action, and, therefore, indispensable in the construction of the resignification of the man. Such resignification is part of human nature, which is why it is an existential need. In this sense, dialogue, as a form of reflection and analysis, is the essential instrument of liberating action. In conclusion, the author discusses action and cultural revolution, movements that are essential in the liberation process. The internalization of dominating precepts contained in the dominated in a self-defense movement reflects the thinking and expression of an alienated society. At this juncture, the educator’s mediation in the pedagogical and dialogical aspects contributes to the development of the cultural revolution of the masses through teaching and learning. In other words, the production of knowledge based on the cultural experiences of educators and students contributes to the contextualized insertion of reality and its established relationships with the world.

According to Freire, liberation is effective when the dominated are aware of the reality denied to them and this requires a pedagogy of denunciation, based on the students’ reality, in order to provide awareness among the classes most in need.

Finally, the book is recommended to all professionals in education and related areas, who intend to expand knowledge on the subject in favor of transforming classes devoid of reflective thinking, developing critical conceptions towards society and through dialogue as a basis for human relations. Even though it is a work from 1979, the themes are pertinent and applicable to the present day, it demystifies various literacy methodologies, showing that it is

possible to teach effective reading and writing practices, using simple and objective methodological resources.

Furthermore, the philosophical theoretical contribution created by the author is relevant to the initial and continuing training of educators, as it addresses the importance of the pedagogical political stance in the educational act; advocates crucial dialogue for the active transformation of the student; it praises the student's culture, as a real context for the construction of knowledge, and elevates education as a means of emancipating man.

Therefore, the social premises listed in the work support transformative and humanistic pedagogical practice, as they denote denote the real objective of education. In other words, it proposes a social pedagogy, aimed at developing an education based on the participation of students, capable of fighting for better social conditions, able to rescue their dignity and restore their culture, an active role outside the school walls.

In short, Paulo Freire in his work leads us to reflect on how much progress still needs to be made towards the construction of an emancipatory, more democratic and critical education, aimed at raising awareness, transformation and liberation from this reality that results in inequality and human degradation.

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