

PAULO FREIRE: A GLOBAL AND COSMOPOLITAN EDUCATOR. THE VOICE OF THE LATIN AMERICAN BIOGRAPHER.¹

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ABSTRACT Paulo Freire is perhaps the best-known educator in the world and his work has inspired a generation of progressive teachers and even socialist educational projects. Freire's principle of education as a cultural action, his conceptualization of *conscientização*—the process of conscientization or consciousness raising—and his approach to adult literacy education have been adopted and adapted by many educational initiatives in which in which the learning activity takes into account socio-political context or significant situations in which it takes place. But what is the political origin of Freire's theory and practice? What is the political content of his so-called method? How is it that Freire's ideas have had such a lasting impacting spreading over decades and across the globe? This text attempts to answer these questions. I investigate the development of Freire from the beginning of his work in Brazil and Chile, through efforts to apply his method in different cultural environments of Africa as well as his return to Brazil in the 80s and the beginning of the 90s until his untimely death.

RESUMEN Paulo Freire es quizás el educador mejor conocido en el mundo entero, especialmente desde la segunda mitad del siglo

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XX y el principio de este nuevo siglo. Freire ha inspirado toda una generación de maestros y maestras progresistas e incluso proyectos educativos de orientación socialista. El principio que Freire sugirió de la educación como una acción cultural, la conceptualización de la conscientización, y su acercamiento a la alfabetización ha sido adoptado y adaptado por muchas iniciativas educativas en las cuales la actividad de aprendizaje toma en cuenta el contexto socio-político o las situaciones significantes en las cuales esta actividad tiene lugar. Pero ¿cuál es el origen político de la teoría y la práctica de Freire? ¿Cuál es el contexto social de su llamado método Paulo Freire? ¿Cómo es que las ideas de Freire han tenido un efecto tan amplio a través de décadas impactando el mundo global? Este texto busca discutir algunas de estas cuestiones. Este análisis bio-bibliográfico investiga el desarrollo de Freire desde sus principios en Brasil y en Chile, así como su esfuerzo en aplicar su teoría y método en diversos ambientes culturales de África y su retorno a Brasil en las dos últimas décadas del siglo pasado hasta su muerte.

KEYWORDS: Literacy – Popular education – Biography – Political philosophy of education.

1. Latin American Origin

Since the 1959 publication of *Educación y Actualidad Brasileira* in Recife, Brazil, later revised and published with modifications as *Education as a Practice of Freedom*, Paulo Freire's work has influenced not only the pedagogical practice of Latin America but also of Africa. His main works have been translated into various languages and new generations of educators consider Freire as a classic in his area of scholarship. At the same time, there is a theoretical revalidation of Freire's initial works that emphasize his relationship with a developmental ideology of ISEB² in Brazil in the early 1960s and with the sociological theory of Karl Manheim.

² Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (ISEB), located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during the period from 1955 to 1964, served as one of the main

The ISEB represented one of the most significant efforts, prior to the 1964 coup, to develop a nationalist and developmentalist ideology aimed at contributing to the process of social modernization supported by the Joao Goulart government.

Paulo Freire along with other intellectuals—Heilo Jaguaribe, Roland Corbisier, Alvaro Vieira Pinto, Vicente Ferrerira da Silva, Guerreiro Ramos, Durmeval Trigueiro Mendes—were participants in the intellectual environment that evolved within the ISEB offices. Among the most influential authors for the ISEB theorists was Karl Mannheim; but also influential was German Anthropology of the 1930s (J. Spengler, Alfred Weber, Marx Scheller), existentialist philosophy (M. Ortega y Gasset, JP Sartre, M Heidegger, K Jaspers) and the origins of historical sociology (Max Weber, Alfredo Pareto and Arnaldo Toynbee).

The controversial work of Vanilda Pereira Paiva (1980), documents this issue. The author argues that Freire's perspective was eminently populist and related to the developmental nationalism that prevailed in the Joao Goulart administration. That argument, which has been considered an academic critique of Freire's work in Brazil and has contributed to my sympathetic criticisms of Freire's published work in Spanish and Portuguese. Paiva's analysis is limited in that it is based in part on an orthodox Marxist perspective of the notion of Russian populism and relates it to the discontent with Freire's Christian philosophy and anthropology roots.

Vanilda Paiva has attempted to show in detail the similarity between Freire's concept of critical consciousness process and the understanding process proposed by the Hungarian sociologist. Similarly, Mannheim's major themes, such as the broad discussion

centers for the formulation and dissemination of nationalist and developmentalist ideologies in Brazil.

of liberty, the democratic approach, the fundamental democratization of society, and the theory of democratic personality, are crucial issues in Freire's early writings. Paiva's ex post evaluation is risky, as she emphasizes formal similarities while omitting a substantive analysis of the differences between Mannheim and Freire. It is clear, however, that his origin as a Brazilian educator was ideologically that of a liberal-democratic thinker strongly influenced by the theory of Christian Personalism, whose representatives are, for example, Tristao de Ataide, in Brazil or Emmanuel Mounier, in France. Nonetheless, his early thinking and his writing incorporated Critical Theory a la Frankfurt, and with the passage of time, Gramsci's analysis, and the concepts of radical Deweyism (Torres, 2014).

There are several reasons for Freire's strong influence. First, his works are based on hypotheses that reflect an innovative synthesis of the most advanced currents of contemporary and classic philosophical thought, such as existentialism, phenomenology, Hegelian dialectics and historical materialism. Freire's innovative vision and exceptional talent as a writer in Portuguese and Spanish has conquered, with his initial writings, a wide reading public made up of educators, social scientists, theologians, and political activists.

English-language readers, however, often manifest difficulty in understanding Freirean texts. I think it has less to do with the quality of the translation of his work, despite serious imperfections in some cases, than with the nature of Freire's phenomenological dialectical thought and explanatory strategies. This difficulty may have intensified with the latter books having been "spoken" or "dialogued" compositions with a distinctive oral flavor. Freire's dialectical thought develops within a model of logical and rational analysis different from positivist explanations, and therefore outside the common line of

thought in countries where English is the dominant language.

Second, Freire's early writings appeared during a period of intense political conflict in which the class struggle in Latin America acquired expressive force; recognizing this historical moment is extremely important in understanding Freire's popularity in Latin America. The period from the early 1960s to the early 1970s was marked by interrelated events. Among the most important are: the triumph and consolidation of the Cuban Revolution (1959-1961) and the installation of the first socialist government in the region (1962); the relative advancement and consolidation of popular forces—particularly the unions of the working classes and left-wing political parties—under populist regimes; and the Alliance for Progress project designed and supported by the Kennedy administration as a North American response to the radical trend that emerged such as the Cuban Revolution. The project brought considerable financial support for the economic, political and educational programs of the Latin American continent. Two aspects of this development program should be highlighted: First, support for agrarian reforms that attempted to destabilize the power of the traditional agrarian bourgeoisie and promote agribusiness in the region; second, the diversification and expansion of the industrialization process through import substitution during the period of consolidation of the penetration of United States multinational corporations in Latin America. The implications that these trends had in changing the original political and economic structures were many (Torres, 2020).

This was also a period in which the first symptoms of a crisis of hegemony within the bourgeoisie became clearly perceptible in some countries of the continent. In particular, the populist experience (which could be considered a Bonapartist experience) of Peronism and Getulism appears only as a period between the crisis of

the oligarchic state of the 1930s and the attempt to establish a hegemony of bourgeois industrial capitalism in South American societies of the 1960s. The failure of this attempt and the political activism of the masses provoked bourgeois coalitions that turned towards coups d'état and the administrative control of the state by the military as their last resort to restore order.

A major consequence of this process was the emergence of popular revolutionary movements in Latin America with different expressions and strategies according to the historical experience of each country. For this reason, Freire's proposal for education as a practice of freedom—in opposition to the positivism and educational pragmatism then predominant in educational circles—and the pedagogy of the oppressed naturally resonated with progressive Latin American educators and was put into practice across the region.

Third, among the most critical reasons for Freire's success was the close relationship between his early educational philosophy and Catholic thought. Following the Second Vatican Council (1965), the Catholic Church and other Christian churches entered a process of ideological transformation and expansion of their socio-cultural systems and strategies aimed at civil society (Torres, 1992).

Concerning the ideological-political position of the church, the Final Documents of Medellín (1968), serves as an essential historical record to verify our thesis. Strong evidence of the influence of Freire's thought appears in the document on education as follows:

Without forgetting the differences that exist with respect to the educational systems among the diverse countries of the Latin American continent, it seems to us that that the curriculum is far too abstract and formalist. Didactic methods are more concerned with the

transmission of knowledge than with the creation, among other values, of a critical spirit in approaching reality. From a "social" point of view, educational systems are oriented towards the maintenance of the prevailing social and economic structures rather than their transformation. It is a uniform education, at a time when the Latin American community has awakened to the richness of human pluralism; it is passive when the time has come for our peoples to discover their own being, plethoric with originality; it remains oriented to sustaining an economy based on the desire to "have more" when the youth in Latin America demands the pleasure of self-realization, oriented towards service and love. Our thinking on this aspect seeks to promote a vision of education that is consistent with the integral development of our continent. This education is called education for liberation: an education that enables the learner to be the subject of their own development. " (Final Documents of Medellín, Buenos Aires, Paulinas 1971: 70-72 my translation)

This language is similar to that of *Education as a Practice of Freedom* that has enormous resonance as an essential text for Christian educators. In the same way, in 1963, the approval of Freire's literacy method was made official by the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil, which the Grassroots Education Movement adopted (MEB) as its method for literacy through the "tele school" (distance education, using televisions and monitors).

In summary, the development of Freire's thought reflects a new horizon: the repercussion of the work of Louis Althusser and, subsequently, of Antonio Gramsci in the academic realm of Latin America, and of the figures of Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, in practical and

political circles, were symptomatic of the new socialist and progressive groups. Additionally, the resurgence of the guerrilla groups and armed struggles with the predominant characteristic of incorporating progressive and massive bourgeois militants--many with Catholic roots—generated new political issues, redefining their strategies, transferring the struggle from the countryside to the urban centers. In some instances, these guerrilla movements - for example, Uruguay with the "Frente Amplio" or in Argentina with the experience of the Peronist Montoneros - were strongly linked to mass political activism.

Indeed, there has been considerable experience with armed struggles in the region throughout the 20th century: the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), the Sandino Movement in Nicaragua during the 1930s, and the Nicaraguan Revolution in the 1970s, famous for its success in the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979, the popular insurrection in El Salvador (1932), The Bolivian Revolution (1952), the armed struggle in Cuba (1957-1959) and the experiences of the multiple guerrillas in Colombia and Venezuela between 1940 and 1970, to cite just the most relevant cases. Notably, one of the most distinctive characteristics of the new guerrilla movements in the 1960s was the adherence of middle-class members rather than the traditional peasant brigades.

The progressive incorporation of the Catholic militants was highly significant, especially the symbolic significance of Father Camilo Torres, a Sociologist educated in Belgium, and one of the founders of the school of Sociology of the National University of Colombia who died fighting alongside the Colombian guerrillas in the late 1960s. Other indications of the new era for Catholic and Protestant churches in the region included the new liberation theology and philosophy, Christianity for the Social Movement, and the new universal ecumenism endorsed by the World Council of Churches.

At that time, there was marked interest in national and indigenous issues within philosophical academic circles along with a revalidation of the popular national culture in opposition to the limitations of European and North American lifestyles. Finally, within the social sciences, new proposals for studying the developmentalist process gained prominence. For instance, the so-called Dependency Theory acquired even greater relevance—transcending Latin American scholarship to become embraced by scholars in the United States, the Soviet Union, as well as Africa—through the writings of Fernando H. Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, André Gunder-Frank, Osvaldo Sunkel, and Pedro Paz, Theotonio dos Santos and others. In this context, through his pedagogical writings, Freire represents and reflects a particular ideological moment in Latin American societies.

After the 1964 Brazilian coup, Freire left the country to live and work in Chile at ICIRA, an organization of the Christian democratic government responsible for expanding education within the agrarian reform program. In Chile, Freire had the opportunity to experiment with his methodology in a new intellectual, political, ideological, and social environment. He worked with the most progressive sectors of the Young Christian Democratic Party—some incorporating into new parties that later formed the Popular Unity coalition—while coming into contact with highly stimulating Marxist thought and robust working-class organizations. That was the beginning of the triumph of the Popular Unity in Chile, the first successful democratic electoral experience of transition towards socialism in Latin America, which began in 1970, ending in 1973 with the coup that brought Pinochet to power.

In 1970, Freire left Chile after accepting an invitation from the World Council of Churches in Geneva to work as a senior consultant for the Department of Education. Meanwhile, the popularity of Freire's method and his

problem-posing educational philosophy grew and reached progressive educators through Latin America and came to be widely adopted, from small local experiences to national adult education initiatives, such as those carried out in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Ecuador.

From that moment on, the word conscientization (or critical consciousness) gains force within the political-cultural programs of socialist groups. Its popularity, as a new educational perspective, grew everywhere. Freire defined pedagogy as cultural action, distinguishing between two distinct forms of cultural action: banking education and problem-posing education. Concerned with the diverse connotations of the word conscientização, Freire explicitly warns against the obsession with using that word—an emblem in conservative programs whose educational principles were closer to banking education than to problematizing education or cultural action for freedom.

Freire's thought is now clearly seen as an expression of socialist pedagogy or social democratic pedagogy, depending from the epoch; and, over time, his analysis, working within the historical-materialist model, redefines his old existentialist-phenomenological themes without adopting an orthodox position.

These brief considerations serve to guide us in the following section, to will clarify the characterization of the process of education, cultural action and critical consciousness in Freire's work and its contribution to radical social change.

2. Dialectic phenomenology

In the text "Liberating Cultural Action," published in the author's book, Paulo Freire: Education and Conscientization (Salamanca, Spain), Paulo Freire affirms:

My perspective is dialectical and phenomenological. I believe that from here, we have to see how to overcome that opposing relationship between theory and practice: overcoming what should not be done on an idealistic level. From a scientific diagnosis of this phenomenon, we can determine the need for education as a cultural action. Cultural action for liberation is a process through which the consciousness of the oppressor that lives within the consciousness of the oppressed can be drawn out (Torres, Salamanca, Sigueme, 1980: 85).

Therefore, from Freire's perspective, education as cultural action is related to the process of critical consciousness and, as a problematizing objective education, must be an instrument of the political organization of the oppressed. Paulo Freire in an interview published in the same book (158-159, our translation) where further expands: "The first level of apprehension of reality is awareness. This knowledge exists because as human beings we are "placed" and "informed," as Gabriel Marcel was accustomed to saying, people re spectators with and in the world.

That coming into awareness of the world, however, is not yet critical consciousness. There exist levels of intensity of awareness. That is, the development of a critical awareness.

For this reason, critical consciousness implies going beyond the spontaneous sphere of apprehension of reality towards a critical position. Through this critique, reality becomes a known object of which the individual assumes an epistemological position: a person seeking knowledge. Therefore, critical awareness is an environment test, a reality test. As we are raising awareness, we are revealing reality, and we are penetrating the phenomenological essence of the object that we are trying to analyze.

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Critical consciousness does not mean confronting reality, assuming a false intellectual position, which is "intellectualist." Critical consciousness cannot exist outside of praxis, that is, outside of the action-reflection process. There is no critical consciousness without historical commitment. Therefore, critical consciousness means historical consciousness. In the last analysis, class consciousness is not psychological consciousness. Class consciousness does not signify class sensitivity. Class awareness implies class practice and class knowledge. For this reason, the revolution is also an act of knowledge. For no other reason, Lenin emphasizes the importance of revolutionary theory without which, he asserts, there would be no revolution.

Finally, class consciousness has a strong identity with class knowledge. But knowledge does not come naturally. If we define knowledge as a fact finished in itself, we would be losing the dialectical vision that can make the possibility of knowing explicit. Knowledge is a process resulting from the permanent praxis of human beings on reality. In truth, individual existence, although it presents singular characteristics, is a social existence".

Therefore, education implies the act of knowing between knowledgeable subjects, and awareness is at the same time a logical possibility and a historical process linking theory with praxis in an indissoluble unity. At this

point, a summary of the principal characteristics of Freire's analysis is essential:

1. Freire's global proposal transcends the critique of current educational models and essentially develops by transforming itself into a critique of culture and the construction of knowledge. In summary, the basic affirmations of Freire's work rely on a dialectical epistemology to interpret the development of human consciousness and its relationship with reality.

2. For Freire, the central questions and problems of education are not pedagogical questions. On the contrary, they are political questions. Ultimately, the educational system does not change society; on the contrary, society has the power to change the educational system. Meanwhile, the educational system can still play a crucial role in a cultural revolution. For Freire, the revolution implies the conscious participation of the masses. Critical pedagogy, as a cultural praxis, contributes to revealing the ideology hidden in people's conscience. Put like this, the revolution itself is a meaningful pedagogy for the masses –Freire has spoken of revolution as a continuous political workshop.

3. But what can be done before the revolution? Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed is designed as an instrument of pedagogical and political collaboration in the organization of the subordinate social classes. In this sense, it is important to emphasize the distinction proposed by Freire between "cultural action" and "cultural revolution": "Cultural action develops in opposition to the elite that controls power; in contrast, the cultural revolution occurs in complete harmony with the revolutionary regime, despite the fact that the cultural revolution should not be subordinated to revolutionary power. The limits of cultural action are determined by the reality of the oppressed and

by the "silence" imposed by the ruling elite. The nature of the reality of the oppressed consequently determines different tactics, necessarily different from those used in the cultural revolution. As cultural action, it confronts "silence" as an external fact and, at the same time, as an internal reality; the cultural revolution confronts "silence" only as an internal reality (Freire, 1970: 51).

4. The specificity of Freire's proposal is the notion of critical consciousness as class knowledge and praxis. Following the Brazilian philosopher Álvaro Vieira Pinto, Freire considers the "heuristic activity of consciousness as the greatest possible contribution of the thought process." In that sense, he sees his contribution to the process of human beings as a constant revalidation of the "subjective" conditions for revolutionary praxis.

5. It is a pedagogy of consciousness. Therefore, this pedagogy—particularly in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*—emphasizes a fundamental aspect in the process of political organization of subordinate social classes: the links between revolutionary leadership and the practices of the masses. They are expressions on a generic level—particularly in the first writings before the African experience—closely related to political ethics, without discussing, in detail, the problems and characteristics of the State and the revolutionary political party.

6. Finally, from an educational perspective, Freire's proposal is an anti-authoritarian proposal despite the directive pedagogy, whereby teachers and students teach and learn together. Starting from the principle that education is an act of knowing, teacher-student and student-teacher must engage in a permanent dialogue characterized by their "horizontal relationship," which does not exclude power imbalances or differences in experiences and knowledge. It is a process that takes place

not in the classroom but within a cultural circle. A "discursive" knowledge does not exist, but rather a knowledge based on daily and contradictory experiences of teachers-students / students-teachers. Indeed, this set of concepts, unfavorable to crucial components of an authoritarian pedagogical framework, emerges as a practice and ideology of "counter-hegemony" within teacher training institutions.

In this sense, in the 1960s, Freire's proposal is not related to the formal system of instruction before the revolution. On the contrary, from the beginning, this proposal avoids suggesting a change within formal education marked by the concentration of bureaucratic mechanisms. In its place, change the reference to the non-formal, less structured system. Another important characteristic of this strategy is that many of its representatives avoid working with this pedagogy within the institutions of the capitalist State, preferring to work professionally in universities or private institutions, often linked to religious organizations or churches. It was not surprising, therefore, that upon returning to Brazil in June 1980, Freire worked at the Pontifical Catholic University (PUC) of Sao Paulo and the public higher education institutions, the University of Campinas (UNICAMP) and the University of Sao Paulo (USP). Rosiska and Miguel Darcy de Oliveira - who were members of the Institute for Cultural Action (IDAC), founded by Freire in Geneva, and Freire's main collaborators in Guinea -Bissau- also worked, when they returned to Brazil, on a popular education project supported by the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo.

There are some complementary arguments for that strategy:

1. Freire and progressive educators had initially developed their proposal in Brazil (1960-1964), Chile (1965-1970), and Africa.

2. The political implications of adult education exceeded those of formal instruction methodologies. Therefore, defining, for example, pedagogical constructs such as "generative words" as based on the community's needs and its "minimal vocabular universe."

3. From the point of view of this educational philosophy, adult education programs are more linked to the needs of the community and more sensitive to its pressures than formal instruction. Therefore, "popular" education must be understood more as a form of education developed by the oppressed than for the oppressed.

4. This education also has a curricular and organizational flexibility that formal instruction does not present.

5. The results of adult education are more immediate than those of formal instruction. It is unnecessary to wait 10-15 years, as is the case with the formal schooling of children, to incorporate the "graduate" into the job market or political activities.

6. Adult education, in the periphery of capitalist social formations, seeks to work mainly with the dispossessed, those who do not have power, revealing that illiteracy, far from being a "social ailment," is a consequence of a hierarchical class structure, or of violent historical processes such as colonization.

7. Finally, adult education has shown great importance as an instrument for political mobilization and critical awareness in some of the transition processes towards socialism, such as in Cuba and Nicaragua.

It is essential to highlight that, as the experience of Latin America shows, this pedagogical proposal can only be adopted, at least in a liberal-democratic institutional and political context. Such a condition obviously restricts its applicability in some Third World countries under despotic-bourgeois regimes. Consequently, this pedagogy may be adopted by a revolutionary party—as part of its educational strategy within a process of social transition—or by social movements based on non-governmental organizations.

The experience of the Workers' Party in the municipal administration of Sao Paulo and the role of Paulo Freire as Secretary of Education of the city of Sao Paulo with his bold initiatives for democratic curricular reform, the Council of Schools and MOVA-SP showed the limits and possibilities of a progressive administration of the public system.

3. The African Influence

Paulo Freire's first contact with Africa occurred through his participation in the Tanzanian Literacy campaign after 1970. He was invited to present his literacy method at the Institute of Adult Education at the University of Dar in Salaam and help organize new experimental projects, such as the Adult Education Course curriculum. Unfortunately, only scattered references and scant documentation of experiments with Freire's literacy method exist to evaluate his experience in Tanzania.

Likewise, through Tanzania, Freire's introduction into the African reality led to a significant phase as he immediately came to have a more meaningful participation in the literacy efforts of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé, and Príncipe. Paulo Freire many times expressed

his interest in the experiences of Angola and Mozambique in adult education.

We can summarize the most significant differences and similarities compared to the Latin American experience concerning this work. In Africa, educational development was strongly influenced by the decolonization process, particularly because the colonial educational structure is different from non-colonial education. Colonial education was elitist. For those who had access to colonial education, it essentially served as a means of cultural "de-Africanization"—the Portuguese way—a particularly more violent way of colonizing: a means of creating a select corps of civil servants who generally, upon graduation became employees of middle government positions within the bureaucracy under official colonial leadership; a means of creating a select urban elite to support colonizer's project: a black skin, white mask of the bourgeoisie, in the words of Frantz Fanon. Regarding this colonial context in the case of Guinea-Bissau, Freire concurred with the perception of Amilcar Cabral, which was that the intellectuals of the bourgeoisie had just that alternative: "to enter the revolution or commit class suicide, becoming a real option of the middle class in the general picture of the struggle for national liberation" (Paulo Freire, 1978: 16).

Freire argues that the new educational system would not contribute to class suicide among intellectuals but impede them from becoming elites within a new society—an important measure is to link education and productive work, avoiding full-time students, and normalizing the working student promoting an intimate relationship with the peasant (rural worker).

A second significant difference is the level of development of the productive forces and the social relations of production that have determined the class structure and the dynamics of society. African societies differ from Latin American societies in several respects.

For example, there is no extensive agrarian bourgeoisie in rural areas with "oligarchic" origins—preserving ownership of the means of production—as is the Brazilian case which is comparable to "coronelismo" with its "patrimonial" foundations and "clientelistic" practices that historically have affected the configuration of the Brazilian bureaucratic state.³

Similarly, there is no extensive industrialization process that could somehow allow the emergence of a national industrial bourgeoisie with any different objectives—however secondary—in its economic and symbolic interest originating from the agrarian bourgeoisie, multinational corporations, or the State bureaucracy, as is the case of Argentina, Brazil or Mexico for example. These differences, expressed in the political struggle, demanded different political strategies and different levels of the relative autonomy of the State in Latin America. Likewise, the petty bourgeoisie of African societies, now firmly tied to the post-colonial state, did not develop an extensive educational system like the post-populist experiences in Latin America.

In other words, the pressures expressed by the middle classes towards expanding secondary and higher education institutions were not present. This observation is compatible with Amilcar Cabral's assertion that "under colonial conditions, it is the petty bourgeoisie that is inside state power" (Cabral, 1969: 69). Despite having a growing interventionist role in African societies, the military did not have the same historical importance in the constitution of the nation-state as they did, for example, in Latin America. Neither did the Catholic Church—another major participant in Latin American politics—secure the religious monopoly and cultural influence it had maintained in Iberian and Luso America

³ A traditional form of oligarchy.

Capitalist social formations in Africa and Latin America have some similar characteristics, including peasant illiteracy. However, post-colonial African governments have concentrated educational efforts in rural areas. In contrast, in Latin America—due to an accelerated urbanization process, burgeoning internal migrations, the penetration of "agribusiness," and ultimately, the combined effects of the irregular development of capitalism—there is a progressive imbalance between the areas rural and urban. Illiterates are concentrated, in equal measure, within rural areas and the peripheries of capitals or metropolitan centers. In that continent, Paulo Freire had direct contact with the peasantry and the populations in the urban periphery. These experiences became primary sources for the elaboration of his problematizing education. Freire has emphasized the contrast between the Brazilian and Chilean experiences and his experience in Guinea Bissau.

Freire has argued that adult literacy programs, understood as a political act and as an act of knowledge within the national reconstruction process, will be successful under conditions of progressive and radical alterations in society's social relations of production. Freire argues that: "as an educator, I place greater emphasis on understanding an exact method of knowing [...] my great concern is the method as a means of knowledge. Being this the case, *we* must ask ourselves, to *know* in *favor* of what and, because of that knowledge, *against* what to *know*; in whose *favor* to *know*? (Freire, 1986: 97)

Freire will argue that the successful conclusion of the literacy campaign and the continuation of the post-literacy process is strongly linked to the progressive realization of the social transition to socialism in Guinea-Bissau.

At that point, one of Freire's richest methodological suggestions in Guinea and Sao Tomé and Príncipe was to start adult education programs in areas undergoing

transformation or that have experienced critical conflicts, for example, during the liberation war, or through social class tensions and disputes. Freire argued that adult education programs would help strengthen the revolutionary consciousness of people participating in the liberation struggle or who have committed the transition towards socialism and radical change in the social relations of production. However, in a more coherent and systematic way, there is a demand to associate the literacy process with the process of production and productive work—one of the main theoretical failures in Freire's early writings.

Rosiska and Miguel Darcy de Oliveira raised this crucial methodological question in light of political and technical considerations. Any population gains greater motivation for literacy programs if they have participated enthusiastically in the liberation struggle and accumulated a rich cultural and political experience that the program offers and develops. However, the criterion of political receptivity growing out of the richness of the group's previous experience is insufficient. If the literacy campaign aims to transcend the celebration of the past and instead offers a vision towards the future, the region selected for the campaign must be experiencing a socio-economic transformation. This aspect seems extremely important because it is questionable whether learning to read and write corresponds to the real need of a peasant who continues to live and produce in traditional ways in a rural area. On the other hand, literacy may acquire more meaning if it is related to the production of new techniques being introduced in a particular area or to the creation of new production units, such as, for example, agricultural cooperatives. In other words, within the context of a transformative process, literacy could facilitate the peasant's acquisition of new technical knowledge necessary for the literacy project to be oriented towards and contribute to the political mobilization of the

community; empowering the peasant to take command of the change process, rather than simply being a passive "beneficiary" of an established plan that is applied from the outside to the inside of the communities. (Darcy de Oliveira, 1976: 49).

Adding to this "economic determination," a third important difference with the Latin American scenario resides in specific political variations. First, the experience in Tanzania offers Freire the opportunity to work within the socialist experiment, with a centralized plan, a revolutionary socialist party, and a substantive interest in adult education as a real methodological alternative to the formal educational system. Adult education in Tanzania is far from irrelevant: with a population of seventeen million, the literacy rate in 1966-1967, when functional literacy programs began, was 25-30%. When the literacy programs were evaluated, in 1975-1976, the government declared that the literacy rate had grown to 75-80%; however, other sources have stated that it was 55-60%.

Adult education was inextricably political education that, as Denis Goulet clarified, that incorporated politicized issues such as the political unity between Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde and took on issues concerning the association between manual and intellectual work, and the notion that it was the responsibility of all citizens to contribute to the PAIGC effort to create a just society moving forward. These factors were enhanced by the PAIGC experience of revolutionary struggle in Guinea-Bissau, when the literacy campaign appeared to reach a critical stage in the national reconstruction after the liberation war, an experience comparable to Nicaragua during its own literacy campaign. In this respect, Freire expressed the contrasting results of the early attempts in Guinea-Bissau: For a period of time, the literacy campaign was completely successful among the militants of the Revolutionary Army in urban areas of Guinea-Bissau, yet

the Basic adult education directed at society at large failed in its fundamental objectives.

Second, another innovation from that African period is Freire's enthusiastic opinion of the leadership, for example, Amílcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau, President Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, or President Pinto de Acosta in São Tomé and Príncipe. That aspect is particularly true in the constant references given by Freire in the writings of Amílcar Cabral as a revolutionary Marxist theorist.

Third, Freire was aware of the difficulty of choosing a language of instruction for the literacy programs; that is, should it be in an indigenous or Creole language(s), or should it be in Portuguese? This question, although briefly analyzed, continues to be relevant—from Freire's perspective--towards the process of national identity, mainly when "now the precise figures were not available, approximately 80% of the total population of Guinea Bissau did not speak Portuguese. The common language of various ethnic groups in the country is Creole, a mixture of Portuguese and African dialects" (Goulet, 1978: 31). In other words, Creole is spoken by approximately 45% of the population and is not a written language.

On a personal level, it is understandable that Freire, a sensitive intellectual, shows interest in these questions, having rediscovered his mother tongue in Guinea-Bissau, then so distant from Brazil, ten years after his exile. Finally, it is a different innovation in Freire's experience in Africa, and the strong emphasis placed on the post-literacy process as inextricably associated with the literacy phase. In a letter to the coordinators of the cultural circles in São Tomé and Príncipe, Freire emphasized the following objectives for this post-literacy process:

1. Consolidate the knowledge acquired in phases prior to mastering writing, reading, and mathematics.

2. Deepen that knowledge by systematically introducing the basic rudiments of the grammatical and arithmetic categories - fundamental operations.
3. Continue, in a more profound way, with the reading of reality through the reading of varied texts and rich and varied topics.
4. Develop the capacity for critical analysis of reality and oral expression of that reality.
5. Prepare students for the next stage, which, due to the needs imposed by the national reconstruction process, courses for technical training must be created in various sectors. That is the same as saying that these human resources training courses are specifically developed with a critical vision and, through that, with a global vision that opposes the directed and alienated vision of their activities.

Paulo Freire's work in Africa has been the focus of criticism and controversy. What follows is a brief presentation and analysis of the Guinea-Bissau literacy training.

The planning phase of the mass literacy campaign began in 1975, and the first campaign was launched in 1976, with more than 200 literacy teachers organizing cultural circles in villages. Literacy training inspired by Freire's method was adopted in rural areas and the capital of Bissau. Linda Harasim says that literacy for national reconstruction had failed: out of 26,000 pupils involved in literacy training, virtually none became functionally literate. In her study, Harasim argues that the causes for this literacy failure were the following:

1. The development of the material conditions of Guinea-Bissau.

2. The contradictory political conditions of the national reconstruction process.
3. Some unexamined assumptions of Freire's theory and method, particularly his populism and ideological idealism that seem to have been shared by the authorities of the revolutionary PAIGC party in Guinea-Bissau.

On the one hand, there seems to be an infinite list of material conditions making any attempt at economic or educational development impossible in one of the 25 poorest countries in the world. That includes low productivity, self-subsisting, dispersed, and isolated villages - Harasim estimates that 88% of the total population in Guinea-Bissau works in subsistence agriculture - cultural, linguistic, tribal, ethnic, and economic differences, and the absence of unity politics. On the other hand, exacerbated by the low level of development of the productive forces, the attempt at national reconstruction in Guinea-Bissau confronted some of the familiar problems of any transition to socialism in the Third World. Harasim explains that among the critical problems facing the national reconstruction, the following are of note:

- A growing bureaucratization, centralization, and inefficiency of the state apparatus;
- A cadre of trained people alongside the necessity of relying on a colonial bureaucracy that did not support the PAIGC struggle;
- The centralized action in the capital of Bissau, with a concentration of 83% of civil workers and 55% of the country total population; thus, deepening the rural urban contradiction;

- The failure of the development strategy based on state farms and cooperatives;
- The need for funding for literacy training.

Finally, adding these resulting contradictions to the poor material conditions and the problems of national reconstruction, Freire's theory and practice failed, not presenting an efficient proposal for literacy. Freire is accused of imposing a Western vision on a different scenario, such as that of Guinea-Bissau. Harasim argues that perhaps Freire had been idealistically led to think that his method had universal validity and was appropriate for any Third World society—a problem that arose from his romanticized perception of the level of political literacy of the rural population of Guinea-Bissau. Along with these misconceptions, the planning, campaign organization, and method implemented did not take into account the absence of well-trained militants in Guinea-Bissau who were capable of understanding and implementing the literacy strategy and method.

According to Harasim, this political criterion was considered an original value: "The fundamental contradiction resides in the fact that Freire's concept of "politics" was rooted in moral and philosophical notions and did not implicitly contain a practical plane of action." In Harasim's assessment, by assuming a utopian vision of social reality and an ideal moment of educational experience, Freire overestimated the animators' [literacy campaign workers] ability to implement the literacy process and produce educational material appropriate quantity, quality, and continuity. Consequently: "The introduction of Freire's method in the conditions of Guinean reality turned out to be a mechanical learning, directive, based on memorization—precisely what Freire was against. Most of the students were unable to go beyond the first five or six words of the manual; they were unable to create new words. Similarly, where there was a

high level of peasant participation, it was perceived that after six months, the students were able to read and write, but when they were questioned about what they were reading and writing, the understanding was zero: they did not understand anything". (Harasim, 1983: 377-378).

Freire's view is very different. Reflecting on the conditions imposed on literacy practice in a society undergoing *social* transformation and how this affected his work, Freire makes reference to the similarities between his work in Africa and his early experiences in Chile and Brazil. Still, the central issue to which he attributes the failure of his efforts in Guinea-Bissau is the choice of language for the literacy process. Considering the literacy experience in Guinea Bissau, Freire argues that, as an intellectual militant, he is not a typical researcher under the auspices of "academic autonomy" or "scientific objectivity." As an intellectual militant, what he could not do in Guinea-Bissau was "transgress the political limitations of the moment. As a foreigner, I could not impose my proposals on the reality of Guinea-Bissau and the needs determined by the political leaders" (Freire and Macedo, 1987: 103).

Freire concluded that the PAIGC had taken over and changed its initial decision, determining that the language of the literacy campaign would be Portuguese, the language of the colonizers (Freire and Faundez, 2013: 124). Nevertheless, as Freire discovered, his suggestion was outside the political limits imposed on his work, and he had to accept Portuguese as the language of instruction, even though his method was not originally designed for the acquisition of a second language. Freire argues his experience in the literacy process, assuring that: "With or without Paulo Freire it was impossible to conduct a literacy campaign in Guinea-Bissau in a language that was not part of people's social practice. My method did not fail, as has been discussed [...] the question should be analyzed in the following terms:

whether it would be linguistically feasible or not to conduct literacy campaigns in Portuguese in any of those countries. My method is secondary to this analysis. If it is not linguistically viable, my method or any other method will certainly fail". (Freire and Macedo, 1987: 112, 113). It is notorious that Amílcar Cabral denied any criticism of his suggestion to adopt Portuguese as the official language as cultural opportunism. For Cabral, Portuguese was the only true gift the colonizers gave to Guinea-Bissau (Amílcar Cabral. Analysis of some types of resistance, Guinea-Bissau, edited by PAIGC 1979: 102-105). Freire does not agree (Freire and Faundez, 1987: 126).

4. Relearning Brazil

After living in exile for sixteen years, upon returning in 1980, Freire tried to relearn Brazil, incessantly traveling throughout the country, lecturing, publishing, and conducting dialogues with students and teachers. Freire succinctly summarized this process of relearning Brazil to me—during a conversation in a Californian summer at Stanford University in July 1983—that he believes in "reading Gramsci, but also living popular Gramsci in the favelas. This is the reason why I work at least two afternoons a week with people from the favelas ."

In 1980, Freire began working as a professor at the Faculty of Education at the Pontificia Universidad Católica and the Faculty of Education at the University of Campiñas in Sao Paulo. After getting involved with higher education, he created the *VEREDA-Centro de Estudos em Educação* [the VEREDA Center for Studies in Education], bringing together many people who worked on the original popular education projects of the 1960s. Politically, Freire collaborated with the Education Commission of the Workers Party (a socialist-democratic party of which Freire has been part of since 1979 while he was still in Geneva)

and accepted the honorary position of President of the São Paulo Workers' University—an institution financed by the Workers' Party concerned with labor unions and political education.

The event that most profoundly marked Paulo Freire in the 1980s was the loss of his wife, Elsa, who passed away in October 1986. With Elsa's sudden death, Freire lost not only his lifelong companion, friend, and lover but also his vital optimism and desire. Freire married again in 1988 to an old friend of the family and his student, Ana María Araujo.

With his appointment to the position of Secretary of Education for the City of Sao Paulo, in January 1989, as part of the Workers Party administration of the city, Freire became responsible for 662 schools, serving 720,000 students, from kindergarten to grade 8. Under his leadership, the Municipal Secretariat of Education, in collaboration with popular movements and educators, initiated an adult education and literacy initiative, MOVA-SP (Movement for the Alphabetization of Youth and Adults in São Paulo), in one of the largest cities in Latin America that at the time had eleven million four hundred thousand people. (Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MOVASP/>)

As Secretary of Education, Freire had the unparalleled opportunity to implement his education philosophy in his own country, not as an academic advisor but as a political activist in a municipality ruled by a socialist party. However, the socialist objectives of the Workers' Party must be considered in the context of the new democratic and constitutional reform in Brazil. Freire left the Ministry of Education on May 22, 1991, but one of his collaborators was appointed to replace him. Freire agreed to remain as a kind of "Honorary Ambassador" of the municipal administration. This author had the honor and privilege to serve as adviser in the administration of Freire.

At the same time, Paulo Freire's perspective on literacy work becomes relevant for industrial societies. After returning to Brazil in 1980, Freire produced several "spoken" books and articles not translated into English, including his dialogues with Sergio Guimaraes, Moacir Gadotti y Guimaraes, Frei Betto, Adriano Nogueira, and Debora Mazza, among others. In his book with Donaldo Macedo, Freire warns of a vision of literacy as a cultural policy, that is, the literacy process should not only offer reading, writing, and numeracy; and calls for the consideration of "a set of practices that work to strengthen and enrich people. In a general way, literacy is analyzed considering whether it serves to reproduce existing social formations or serves as a set of cultural practices that promote democratic and emancipatory change." (Freire and Macedo, 1987).

Literacy as a cultural policy is also mentioned in Freire's work on emancipatory theory and critical theory of society. Therefore, emancipatory literacy "is based on a critical reflection of the cultural capital of the oppressed, transforming itself into a vehicle by which the oppressed are equipped with the necessary tools to re-appropriate their history, culture, and language practice. (Ibidem:157).

The impact of Freire's work on current academic-pedagogical life is impressive and cannot be restricted to the literacy process. The Freirean proposal has not only been implemented in social studies and in the curriculum of adult, secondary and higher education, but in various areas, such as the teaching of mathematics and physics, educational planning, feminist studies, languages, educational psychology, critical reading and writing, among others. Further, in his dialogues with Ira Shor, Freire attempts to formulate the Pedagogy of the Oppressed towards a consideration of the problem of social reproduction in the context of industrialized societies.

It can be argued that Freire's work has been simultaneously reinterpreted and reinvented, as Freire would say, in industrially advanced societies by those who have constructed a new theoretical synthesis by bringing Freire, Dewey, and Habermas together (see for instance Morrow and Torres, 2002).

A notable representative of the agenda of Critical Pedagogy is Henry Giroux and his theory of resistance in pedagogy and curriculum. In other words, Freire's political philosophy has influenced socialist-democratic perspectives on education in the United States. In this sense, Ira Shor's work is exemplary for trying to understand the reproductive power of instruction despite the "Culture Wars" that prevail within the mosaic of the United States and pointing out the possibilities of relating the North American struggles with liberation theory. Consequently, the apparent paradox is that the political activism of literacy in industrialized societies is guided by the notions of education and social change developed in the third world.

5. Concluding with the 'Pedagogy of the Question'

The Latin American and African past of Freire's pedagogy has shown a surprising unity of topics, themes, and methodologies. This unity is possible thanks to Freire's tendency to discuss his practical experience theoretically. As he states, "without exception, each book that I have written has been a report of some phase of political-pedagogical activity in which I was hooked in my youth" (Freire, 1978: 176). In other words, Freire's perspective is a systematization of political-pedagogical practice.

In these closing conclusions, originating from Freire's highly regarded "pedagogy of the question," we would like to invite the reader to consider two essential questions: First, is this a pre-or post-revolutionary pedagogy? Second, in Gramscian terms, can a process directed

towards critical consciousness be taught as a process of counter-hegemony in any historical epoch? Undoubtedly, many other highly relevant points require a much more extensive and theoretical discussion. In the meantime, I must limit my discussion by offering a few conclusions, questioning, or responding to both aspects.

To begin with, what are the political factors that shape liberation education? What are the minimum conditions to engage in education for liberation? Under what functional conditions can we prognosticate methodological, didactic, curricular, and organizational changes required to advance the development of this alternative educational proposal? In other words, given the strength of the educational bureaucracy located mainly within the instructional system and considering the proprietorship of the State concerning the principal means of knowledge production, should this political-pedagogical space shift its main concern from the educational system towards the informal system? Or, given the priority of the political struggle, is pedagogical practice insignificant?

Therefore, assuming, as Freire does, that we cannot modify society by changing the school (liberal utopia), is it also necessary to abandon educational reforms? In other words, if the school system is an arena of struggle for capitalist social formations, what are the authentic spaces of that struggle? That is, do the spaces that contribute to the process of political organization of the oppressed exist? Or, paradoxically, do these spaces contribute to the process of legitimizing the Capitalist State through an indulgent State system but systematically obstructing its organic ties with the working class and social movements?

Similarly, assuming the potential utility of this pedagogy in a process of social transition, is it possible to sustain this Freire pedagogy in a type of "Jacobinism" to be explained following the institutionalization of the revolution? In the same way, considering the strong

emphasis suggested by that pedagogy on the critical consciousness process, how can we reconcile the process of political deliberation opened by that pedagogy with the ideological consolidation process of a triumphant revolutionary movement? When revolutions are not any longer a common occurrence in the 21st century, what other options are opened up for social transformation of the common sense?

Along the same lines of reasoning, emphasizing the importance of critical awareness, is it possible to accentuate and, in the same way, support spontaneous practices of politics to the detriment of the process of political organization, coordinated struggle, and centralized politics for a successful revolution? Put differently, what are the connections between strategies and tactics for social transformation in the context of neoliberalism and the growing authoritarian populism emerging in many societies on Earth, challenging liberal democracy?

The second question is of comparable importance. Generally speaking, most of the authors have tried to analyze education, hierarchical class structure, and ideological domain; they have focused on education starting from the hegemonic classes' perspective and the process of cultural and social reproduction. Freire's work, on the contrary, has shown another perspective: the need to redefine education starting from the perspective of the subordinate classes. There is considerable coincidence with the Gramscian education formula, contributing to the development of a new culture, a new *Weltanschauung* (or world view) of the subaltern classes.

The oppressed class must develop this culture of a new *Weltanschauung* through its organic intellectuals, starting from the bosom of capitalist society? The concept of organic intellectuals in this time and age become controversial, as it is as well the concept of public

intellectual. Bypassing this conversation, I would like to emphasize that Freire's premises are equally important:

1. It is crucial to study the educational process starting from a dual perspective: using the lens of the hegemonic class—reproduction of social relations of production—and the lens of the subordinate classes: education as a way to build a new hegemony.

2. Education is vital to rebuilding the culture of the oppressed, mainly through the notion of the systematic elaboration of popular knowledge: knowledge understood as an instrument of struggle against hegemony.

3. Designing autonomous educational practices embedded in poor urban-rural communities can help expand the organization and power of the oppressed.

4. Finally, Freire's notion of a dialectical relationship between the revolutionary leadership and the masses has been a rich terrain for educational, indeed revolutionary, and mass practices. In Gramscian terms, a rich terrain for developing young worker leadership. In this sense, the relevance given by Freire for the epistemological and political self-surveillance of the militants' praxis in Guinea-Bissau raises a new and essential question towards political practice: how should this surveillance be assumed within a revolutionary process? Moreover, is it possible this surveillance in the context of spontaneous mass processes of social transformation?

Even so, some experiences originating from the many popular education experiments in Latin America—dismantled after a coup d'état and the assassination of certain militants as a result of their exposure—left some people wondering if this pedagogical program is a feasible project for facilitating the process of building a counter-

hegemony; or, on the contrary, should be viewed as a sympathetic but impossible dream. Or, actually, should the educational process presented above be supported to reveal the controlled variables that achieve a better result from these educational programs? This may include linking educational practices to a revolutionary party or redefining the importance, extent, and meanings of political struggle within the educational system and within the capitalist state bureaucracy. A comprehensive study, beyond the limits and possibilities of this text, is required to answer all these questions. Meanwhile, it is possible to conclude that there are good reasons why, in pedagogy today, we can be with Freire or against Freire, but not without Freire.

Afterword: Is Freire Current Today?

A central proposition of political philosopher Paulo Freire was to reinvigorate the question of ethics in education and its implication for citizenship building.⁴ Freire was a postcolonial thinker credited with being the initiator of Critical Pedagogy, one of the first theoreticians and practitioners of an epistemology of the Global South, and originator of the Participatory Action Research Methodology (PAR), on parallel lines with the work of Colombian sociologist Orlando Falls Borda. This methodology questions who is the object, the subject of the research; and, who owns the intellectual property

⁴ At the turn of the century, Freire's main book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was classified as the third book most cited in Google in a publication of the London School of Economics and Political Science. The book of Freire is listed as the third most cited after the book of Thomas Kuhn *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and the second most cited, from Everett Rogers *Diffusion of Innovations*. It is important to mention that *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is the only book on education in the 25 most cited. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/05/12/what-are-the-most-cited-publications-in-the-social-sciences-according-to-google-scholar/>

emerging from the research (e. g., study findings, data collected, findings, publications, etc.).

This methodology has not been applied only to education. Still, there is a growing application of PAR in other fields such as public health: “PAR reflects questioning about the nature of knowledge and the extent to which knowledge can represent the interests of the powerful and serve to reinforce their positions in society. It affirms that experience can be a basis of knowing and that experiential learning can lead to a legitimate form of knowledge that influences practice. Adult educators in low-income countries drew on these intellectual perspectives to develop a form of research that was sympathetic to the participatory nature of adult learning. This perspective, strongly supported by the work of Freire, who used PAR to encourage poor and deprived communities to examine and analyze the structural reasons for their oppression. From these roots, PAR grew as a methodology enabling researchers to work in partnership with communities in a manner that leads to action for change.”⁵

UNESCO has built new principles for education over several decades, following a framework traditionally defined as Scientific Humanism.⁶ Institutional structures

⁵ Fran Baum, Colin MacDougall, Danielle Smith. *Journal of Epidemiology Community Health*. 2006 Oct; 60(10): 854– 857. doi: 10.1136/jech.2004.028662. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2566051/> See also Torres (1992), ‘Participatory Action Research and Popular Education in Latin America.’ *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 5 (1).

⁶ J. P. Singh; UNESCO: Scientific Humanism and its Impact on Multilateral Diplomacy. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12624>; Bokova, Irina, A New Humanism for the 21st Century. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/a_new_humanism_for_the_21st_century/; Vincenzo Pavone, *From the Labyrinth of the World to the Paradise of the Heart: Science and Humanism in UNESCO's Approach to Globalization* (Critical Media Studies: Institutions, Politics, and Culture) Landham, Maryland, Lexington Books-Rowman and Littlefield, 2008; Freire, P (2013), *Education for Critical*

articulating governability of societies--more so now with the growing challenges facing democratic societies add additional complexity to political and pedagogical paradigms calling for new models of partnership between the state and civil society. A new compact based on intelligent collaboration—though alliances between social movements, grass-roots organizations, community organizations, universities and critical intellectuals, and NGO's working closely with diverse institutions from the public sectors—will require careful and sustained public policies that will promote, facilitate, in some cases finance such compact.

In addressing 21st Century challenges, lifelong learning must be valued as a new human right. Viewing lifelong learning as a human right is particularly critical in the domain of retraining for new jobs with growing concerns about the precariat⁷ and their ability to learn, unlearn and relearn as the precondition for literacy beyond reading, writing, and numeracy. A lifelong learning culture shows how to live together, care about the environment, the planet, our societies, ourselves, and how to promote a model of happiness based on freedom and dialogical democracies.

Paulo Freire was a sensei, a great teacher with whom we are eternally indebted. In this celebration of his centenary, we should always remember the mantra Freire offered Moacir Gadotti and me during a conversation at UCLA in 1991 having a coffee, when we discussed the creation of the Paulo Freire Institute in São Paulo. At that meeting, Paulo insisted: "I do not want the creation of a fellowship or a Church. I want people not to repeat me but to reinvent me."

Consciousness, London and New York, Bloomsbury Academic.

⁷ This neologism refers to people in a condition of existence without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare.

I will conclude with a poem that I wrote a few days after his death.

Requiem for Paulo Reglus Neves Freire

Now you are no longer with us.
Your heart that loved so much
Stopped beating, and you were gone.
You have left us so alone.

With you has gone the voice of the poor,
the dispossessed, the oppressed,
those without voice.

With you has gone the consciousness of Latin America,
a great part of our dignity.

With you has died a living myth,
you, who struggled with your contradictions,
you, who taught us with parables,
you, who captivated with your smile,
your white hair and beard, blowing in the breeze,
an incomparable beautiful face.
Like Minerva's owl
 You arose at dawn.

With you, we were born into the vigor of education,
 that you defended until the last moment.

With you, we learned
 dialogue, not polemics.

With you, we possessed a prophet.
 who denounced and annunciated.

With you, we knew that the pilgrimage of this world
 only has meaning in struggle.

With you, teacher who sheltered himself beneath the
mango tree,
 practicing words and world
there on the back patio of your childhood home in Recife,
we came to understand the anguish and hopes
 of all teachers.

You left us your spirituality, without limits
 like your humanity.

You left us your scruples,
testimony of an old fighter without concessions
 to capitalism, to injustice, to absent democracy, to
oppression,
to lovelessness and the last of demons you sought to
exorcise
 Neoliberalism.

You left us an invitation
 not to celebrate you or repeat
 but to reinvent you.

With you, we go on living
 with that sensibility, utopian,
in loving solidarity.

Still, you left us so alone,
so immensely sad.
Friend, teacher
 who is no longer.

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