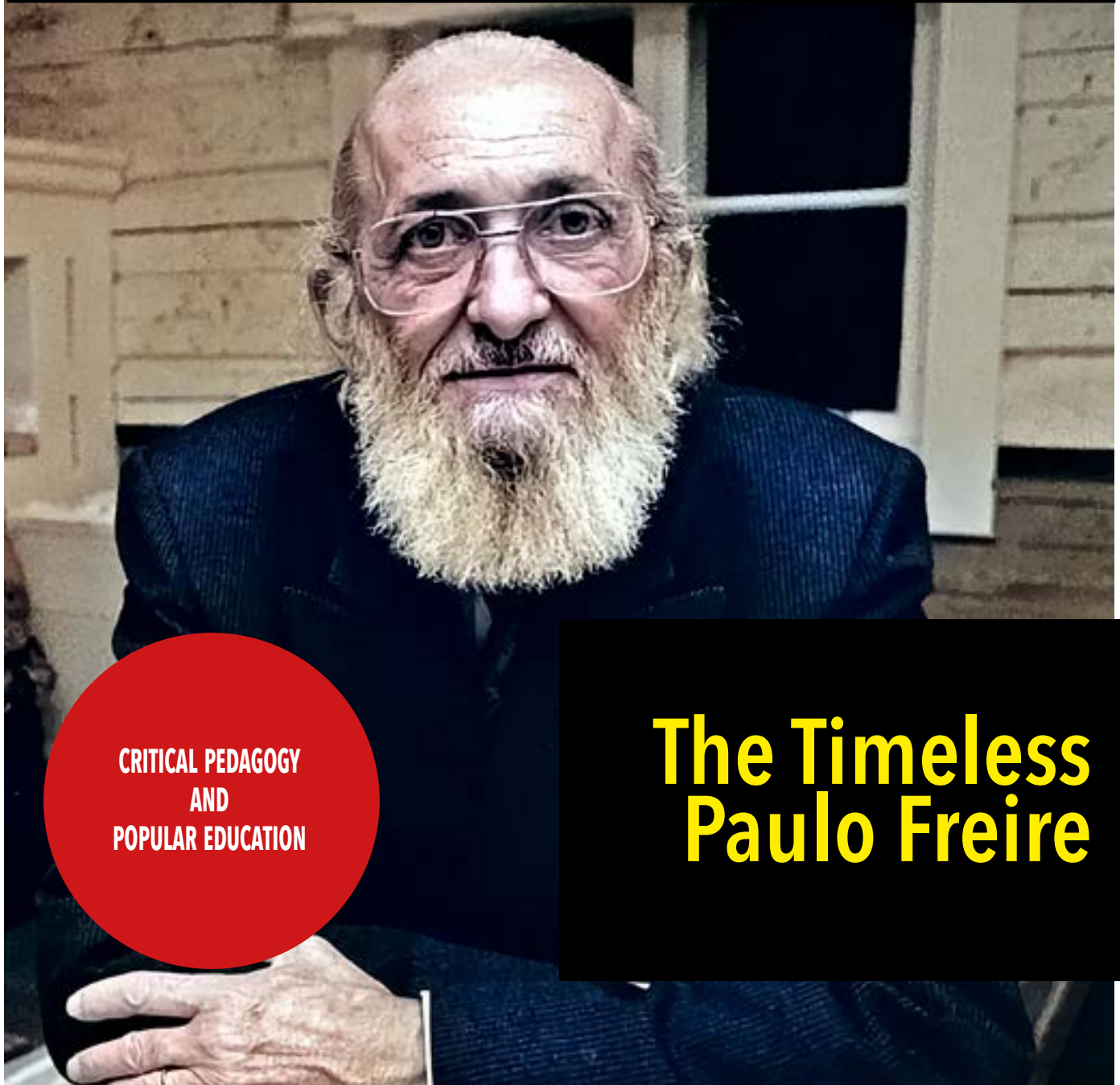


cooperative approaches



27 WINTER 2025



CRITICAL PEDAGOGY
AND
POPULAR EDUCATION

The Timeless Paulo Freire

"The only path that offers any hope for a better future for humanity is that of cooperation and partnership."

Kofi Annan



ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF COOPERATIVE APPROACHES (APCA)

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THE TIMELESSNESS OF PAULO FREIRE

MATHEUS BATALHA NERY



In Brazil, there is a pedagogy before and after Paulo Freire. The one that preceded him was deeply marked by traditionalism, where the authority of the teacher and the authoritarianism of Brazilian society were constantly emphasized. Its focus was on catechesis, learning through repetition of reading, writing, and basic arithmetic, as well as morality and religion, in line with colonial, Jesuit, and Pombaline¹ influences.

Remnants of this past are also present in other movements, such as Anísio Teixeira's Escola Nova (New School), which sought to build a more democratic school system without renouncing its traditional roots, and in technical education, which focused on the idea of an efficient school system, given that society needed obedient workers who were educated, preferably without learning to question their realities. Freire's work broke with all of

this. With him, pedagogy began to privilege liberation from oppression through dialogue, the problematization of reality, critical knowledge, and the active role of people in a dialogical learning relationship. His ideas resonated around the world.

FIVE CONCEPTS

Difficult experiences, social exclusion, and overcoming obstacles to education permeated Freire's entire philosophical work. Liberation Pedagogy, as his teaching-learning method became known, can be described, very simply, in five broad concepts. The first of these is precisely the need for constant dialogue and horizontality. Here, Freire diverges from the authoritarianism present in school environments, especially against the unilateral knowledge of teachers. The school, in its deepest conception, is a space for argumentation, not silencing. The second

1. This term refers to the Educação Pombalina, i.e., the educational reform undertaken by the Marquis of Pombal in Portugal and, in particular, in the colonies in 1759, which led to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Brazilian territory; education thus came under state control, became secular, and took on the anthropological project of training a financial elite. The criticism here, and that of Freire, focuses on the need to remove colonial thinking, colonialism, from the Brazilian education system.

concept comes from the notion of culture circles, designed to serve as spaces for debate about the reality that surrounds and permeates schools. Instead of traditional classrooms, with all students lined up and obedient, he proposed a space where everyone could look each other in the eye and debate the contrasts of their reality. The third concept derives precisely from this context, that is, the words that form this world also generate contextualization. Here, Freire sought to explore the students' own vocabulary, instead of subjecting them to a constant deposit of new words, which often disregarded their realities. The word thus takes on a social and emotional meaning, and it is the teacher's duty to understand its community logic. This notion paves the way for a fourth element, the concept of consciousness. This is seen as a turning point, given that it is extremely important for learners to understand the power structures and inequalities that surround their existence. Of course, as a fifth element, it is through reading that one reads the world.

POLITICAL COMMITMENT

In the 1960s, this method, as a political action, encountered a deeply fractured reality in Brazil, on the verge of democratic rupture. Two essential moments placed Paulo Freire as persona non grata to the military dictatorship that took power in Brazil in 1964. Both occurred in 1963. The first was the experience in Angicos, Rio Grande do Norte, in the Bra-

zilian Northeast, where Freire, using his method, taught more than 300 sugarcane cutters to read and write in just 45 days. The second was his rise, at the invitation of President João Goulart – a declared communist, in the words of the Brazilian coup-plotting military – to the position of coordinator of the National Literacy Plan. These two events made the political engagement of his philosophy transparent, as his vision radically broke with traditional education, which this philosopher conceptualized as "banking education," and revealed that the educational field is a political act, given that it aims precisely to liberate students from the oppressions to which they are subjected in their society. To be free, a person must understand their political place in the world, so as not to desire to be just another oppressor seeking to oppress and exploit the popular classes. The coup came, and Paulo Freire went into exile.

THE CONTENT OF THE JOURNAL

Essentially, Freire's vision is also a cooperative approach, and this edition of the French magazine *Approches Coopératives* sought to highlight the relevance of his philosophical vision in this year of 2025, the Year of Brazil in France. Thus, three core areas of work were prioritized.

FIVE INTERCONNECTED ARTICLES

In the first, the reader will find articles written by authors who lived with Paulo Freire during his years of exile, as well as

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He also led the efforts that resulted in the creation of the Tiradentes Institute at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. matheusbatalha@academico.ufs.br



Paulo Freire

(1921-1997)

by those who shared his presence during the Brazilian democratization. These are five interconnected articles, written by Maria Amélia Santoro Franco, who offers a moving story of the philosopher's reunion with Mackenzie Presbyterian University, now free from the threat of machine guns; by

Marcela Gajardo, who lived with Freire in Chile, a period in which he wrote his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and before he grew his famous beard; This series of articles includes: one by Cesar Nunes about the period when the philosopher was a professor at UNICAMP and the importance of the concept of love in his work; another by Celso Vasconcelos, who recounts the times when they were educational neighbors at Imaco and Freire's political engagement as municipal secretary of education in São Paulo during the administration of Mayor Luiza Erundina; and finally, closing this sequence, an article by Ana Lúcia Souza de Freiras, about Freire's travels and his relationship with France, especially the Pedagogical Letters project. The tone in these articles is intimate and revealing of many aspects of Paulo Freire's life and work.

THE ESCOLA TERRA

In the second part of this publication, these articles are complemented by an interview with the Escola da Terra (School of the Earth) Program, an initiative of the Brazilian federal government, through the Ministry of Education, which seeks to promote rural education by training teachers to work or who already work in rural and quilombola schools. This program is deeply influenced by Freirian pedagogy. The interview features the institutional coordinator of this program at the Federal University of Sergipe, Marilene Santos, as well as a report on the experience of this work, written by her and by Lívia Jéssica Messias de Almeida, also a professor at this institution. The interview is followed by an article written by Dominique Bénard, editor of *Approches Coopératives*, which analyzes the impact that Freire's work has had and continues to have on the European continent. This collection seeks to foster debate on the importance of Freire's praxis in contemporary times.

TWO ARTICLES AND ONE POEM

The third and final section of this publication features articles by Cecilia Cavalcante Vieira, who provides a transdisciplinary analysis of Freire's work, based on its importance for dance as an area of knowledge and, above all, as a praxis in everyday school life. Her article is followed by one by Federico Brugaletta, who analyzes the relationship between politics, religion, and

the dissemination of Paulo Freire's works in Latin America during the dark years of military dictatorships that haunted many countries. This, in turn, is followed by a brilliant report of experience written by Eduardo Missoni, from his time as a physician and educator in Nicaragua. Finally, since Freire's work imposes lightness on us, we close this edition with a poem by the poet Helena Valmont, which makes us feel the paradoxes of a dialogical relationship.

TWO IMPORTANT CONCEPTS RELATED TO CURRENT EVENTS

Looking at it in perspective, the relevance of this edition fundamentally highlights two important concepts in Freire's work. The first appears in the opening pages of the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. It is the notion of host, which causes the oppressed, faced with many difficult circumstances in life, to internalize a dominant ideology in the form of asserting the values of the oppressor for themselves. Through this process, the oppressed end up hosting within themselves the very ideology that oppresses them—in a world that still flirts with the idea of dictatorship, this concept is more relevant than ever. Overcoming this comes precisely through the critical discovery of this hosting and, of course, a struggle for humanization, in which freedom comes precisely from the liberation of the images of oppression that surround the existence of the oppressed. Thus, to humanize is also to build a path to knowing

oneself, to be free and critical of the ideals of an authoritarian society.

All of this is achieved through dialogic education, which favors horizontal dialogue between educators and students, in the form of a cooperative approach that gives rise to awareness, action, and reflection—praxis—and contextualized teaching. Here, the danger lies precisely in a new rise of technical teaching, where discourses that defend apolitical education gain strength. Brazil, like other countries around the world, also flirts with these discourses – there are many bad examples in Brazilian territories, ranging from projects such as “Escola sem Partido” (School without a Party) to attempts to implement “civic-military schools,” in the form of a return to the technicalist ideals of the military dictatorship. The answer to all this, beyond Freire's own work, also comes from other philosophers, such as Bernard Charlot, a Frenchman based in Brazil, who recently passed away, to whom this edition, in its third segment, also pays tribute. The idea here is that, as a cooperative approach, access to education is also a great gateway to our own humanity. It has no place for strategies that seek only to maintain authoritarianism.

More than ever, Freire's ideas are greatly needed!

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TESTIMONIAL

FREIRIAN TRAJECTORIES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

MARIA AMÉLIA SANTORO FRANCO



I had two memorable encounters with Paulo Freire: one that I call an epistemological epiphany and another that I call an intertwining of affections. Between these encounters and beyond them, there were continuous dialogues, for more than fifty years, through which I became a critical pedagogue, intertwined with the threads and veins of Freirean theory and praxis.

These two moments are not just passages in life: they are processes of existential and intellectual formation, movements of a journey that goes from astonishment to hope. The first encounter revealed Brazil and its contradictions to me; the second confirmed, in the living presence of the master, the coherence between ethics, love, and teaching.

Between them, I built my own conception of critical pedagogy: a scientific statute that, inspired by Freire's radicalism, understands that

either pedagogy is critical, or it is not pedagogy and will be only a technique of domestication, an instrument of maintaining order.

This paper is, therefore, reminiscence and reflection. It is the testimony of a formation woven by the living presence of Paulo Freire and by the permanent search for the epistemological foundations of another Pedagogy; a pedagogy that reaffirms its scientific, critical, and emancipatory nature, focused on denouncing social inequalities and constructing transformative educational practices capable of announcing and reinventing a more just and democratic society.

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL EPIPHANY

In 1968, at the age of twenty, I was studying Education at PUC¹ in Campinas. It was there that I experienced what I call an epistemological epiphany: the moment when I understood a new Brazil: an unjust, unequal, exclusionary Brazil. Faced with the

1. Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas

high rates of illiteracy and poverty that plagued the country, I was also struck by the discovery of what I called the ethics of the privileged: a critical and sensitive attitude of resistance within the elite itself, which sought to face inequalities head-on and recognize in them the urgency of transformation.

At that time, I understood that it was not only the school that produced exclusion; it was society, sustained by an ideology of privilege, that made the school a mirror of its contradictions. The school reverberated this logic, masking the illusion that it was a space for everyone. In practice, it was selective, and this selection was materialized in the curricula, in the knowledge proclaimed as universal and unique, in the contempt for the knowledge of the popular class.

Under the silence imposed by the dictatorship, I found refuge in the spaces of the Catholic Church, where practices and studies based on Liberation Theology were germinating. It was there that I discovered, almost in secret, Paulo Freire. Education as a practice of freedom came to me as a revelation: the certainty that educating is a political and loving act, and that words only become liberating when they are born from dialogue with the oppressed.

These were moments of amazement and discovery. It all began with an explosive triad.



First, I discovered Brazil, the Brazil that did not appear in schoolbooks or official speeches. When I entered university, I found myself faced with two Brazils: the formal Brazil, which wanted to be modern and civilized, and the real Brazil, deeply unjust, unequal, wounded by historical exclusion.

Then I discovered privilege and with it, the possibility of an ethic of the privileged: the critical conscience of those who, belonging to the elite, do not settle for the status quo, but are troubled by inequalities and commit themselves to denouncing injustices.

Finally, I discovered the social doctrine of the Church, which called for justice for the helpless. This discovery shook me deeply. At first, it saddened me: how could I reconcile faith and indignation? How could I live in a society that called itself Christian and, at the same time, legitimized poverty?

... the certainty that educating is a political and loving act, and that words only become liberating when they are born from dialogue with the oppressed.

This new understanding made me realize what the social function of pedagogy should be.

These three shocks—Brazil, privilege, and committed faith—opened cracks in my worldview. I saw, with frightened eyes, the distance between the country that proclaimed itself egalitarian and the exclusionary reality that surrounded us. And, overcome with perplexity, I asked myself:

DOES EDUCATION BEGIN IN THE CLASSROOM OR IN THE WORLD?

It was Paulo Freire who rescued me from this perplexity. In *Education as the Practice of Freedom*, I found the clarity I needed to understand what had previously been nothing but astonishment. Freire boldly stated: *“The school, as it functions, excludes and alienates the working class.” I understood that the school, as it functioned, served as an instrument for maintaining a society that despised the “ragamuffins of life.”*

This new understanding made me realize what the social function of pedagogy should be. I began to understand in a different way what I saw in schools in the suburbs: children who did not complain because they believed themselves incapable, hungry children, barefoot children who soon dropped out of school. The exclusion was not only material; it was symbolic, cultural, and emotional. The school not only denied popular knowledge, but also disqualified it.

Moved by the unease that Freire's words provoked in me, I began to talk to the

children, to listen to their stories, their ways of thinking and naming the world. In these dialogues, I discovered their rich cultural universe, many other forms of knowledge, woven from other life experiences.

Through debates, outrage, and new readings, I understood that the ethics of the privileged is not a compassionate gaze, but a different way of acting. It is the gesture of recognizing the other as a subject of knowledge. Later, I learned that this ethic translates into establishing a new relationship with knowledge (Bernard Charlot).

Shortly thereafter, *“Pedagogy of the oppressed”* emerged as a beacon. Freire wrote from exile, but his voice echoed as denunciation and hope in the face of a country that refused and still refuses to renounce its privileges. The pedagogy he proposed was not just a method, but a liberating ethic, an invitation to remake the world from the perspective of the oppressed.

Realizing how castrating school was and understanding Freire gave me the exact dimension of what a pedagogue should do. He was not made to repeat lessons, nor to reproduce the system, but to identify the obstacles that prevent the underprivileged from realizing their social place and the strength of this place.

In a society marked by such social inequality, I un-

derstood that pedagogy can only be with and for the less privileged. That is how I developed my conception of pedagogy: pedagogy as a radically political praxis.

In the 1980s, while reading Bernard Charlot's *"Mistification of Pedagogy"* [A *Mistificação Pedagógica*], this understanding gained new clarity: *"A pedagogy that does not question power is mere ideology and a refined form of oppression."*

Thus, the epistemological epiphany was complete: to understand Freire was to understand the very political meaning of pedagogy; not as teaching techniques and methods, but as an act of liberating, forming, and emancipating the subject and society that mutually construct each other.

BETWEEN MEETINGS: BUILDING A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Between epistemological epiphany and the intertwining of affections, there is a long journey of study, teaching, and intellectual activism. These were years in which I sought to understand, theoretically and politically, the place of pedagogy in the field of human sciences.

Reading Paulo Freire not only shaped me as an educator, but also prompted me to seek out the epistemological foundations of pedagogy to understand what kind of science it is and/or should be, and what distinguishes it from being a science colonized by other sciences or a



Maria Amélia Santoro Franco and Paulo Freire together during the VI Mackenzie Education Symposium, on April 10, 1997, at Freire's last conference. Source: Paulo Freire Educator Collection (1997)

mere technology for applying other people's theories.

With this concern in mind, I organized study and research groups, produced articles and books, developed participatory practices, created pedagogical action research as a method compatible with critical pedagogy, and sought to systematize a critical conception of pedagogy, understanding it as the science of educational practice and, therefore, inseparable from the ethical, political, and historical dimensions of teaching praxis.

Always imbued with Freire's radicalism, I wrote and reaffirm:

Either pedagogy is critical or it is not pedagogy!

MARIA AMÉLIA DO ROSÁRIO SANTORO FRANCO

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She has experience in the area of Educational Research, with an emphasis on pedagogical action research and critical research on the epistemology of Pedagogy, with a focus on the epistemology of pedagogical practices.

She is a reviewer, editor, and evaluator of projects, collaborating with various journals and institutions, such as INEP, CAPES, and CNPq. She is a consultant on Action Research projects focused on teacher training and popular education.

Her research falls within the following themes: Critical Pedagogies/Emancipatory Pedagogies; Action Research; Pedagogical Practices; Teacher Training; and Critical Didactics.

*She has published over 80 articles in journals and approximately 12 books, including: *Pedagogy as a Science of Education*; *Pedagogy and Teaching Practice*; and co-editor of *Emerging Pedagogies: Principles and Practices*, published by Cortez.*

When pedagogy renounces criticism, it becomes a technique, an instrument of reproduction, a technology of oppression and domestication. It loses its emancipatory character and its reason for existing.

It was in light of this conviction that I pursued my academic path, seeking to build a pedagogy that would assert itself as an autonomous and critical science: a pedagogy committed to the transformation of society and the emancipation of historical subjects.

This journey between my first and second encounters with Freire is, in fact, the journey of a lifetime: from perplexity to awareness, from indignation to action, from astonishment to hope.

THE INTERTWINING OF AFFECTIONS

Many years have passed since that epiphany of youth. I was already a university professor, and when I took over as dean of the Faculty of Education at Mackenzie Presbyterian University, the first decision I made was to symbolically and politically mark the direction of my administration: it would be guided by the critical and liberating thinking of Paulo Freire.

I wanted the beginning of this administration to be a gesture of affirmation and hope: I wanted Freire to come to the university

for a public lecture, which would not be just an academic event, but a celebration of critical teaching, ethics, and love.

With the help of a friend, Helena, a former nun and former student who was close to him, I managed to arrange a meeting with Freire and invite him to give a lecture. Freire readily accepted:

— *I want to go to Mackenzie. The last time I was there, in 1964, they wouldn't let me in. I was greeted at the door with machine guns.*

His decision had the power of gestures that reconcile history. Returning to Mackenzie, now as a guest of honor at the Faculty of Education, was a deeply political act, a symbolic return, laden with meaning. The space that had once rejected him opened up, decades later, to listen to him and welcome him.

Fifteen days before the event, I went to his home in the Sumaré neighborhood of São Paulo. It was a quiet afternoon. Freire's residence was a faithful portrait of his personality: simple, welcoming, full of books, memories, and tenderness. I was received with affection and generous attention. We talked at length about the country, about teacher training, and about the disenchantment that threatened education.

It was during this conversation that he chose the theme

for his speech at Mackenzie: *"Ethics in teaching."* I remember his firm and gentle words: *"My daughter, there is no teaching without decency."*

He told me that the book he was launching, *Pedagogy of autonomy*, was ready and would be launched on the same day, April 10, 1997, at PUC-SP. The coincidence of dates turned the conference at Mackenzie into a milestone: it was as if Freire were offering, firsthand, his last public words on education.

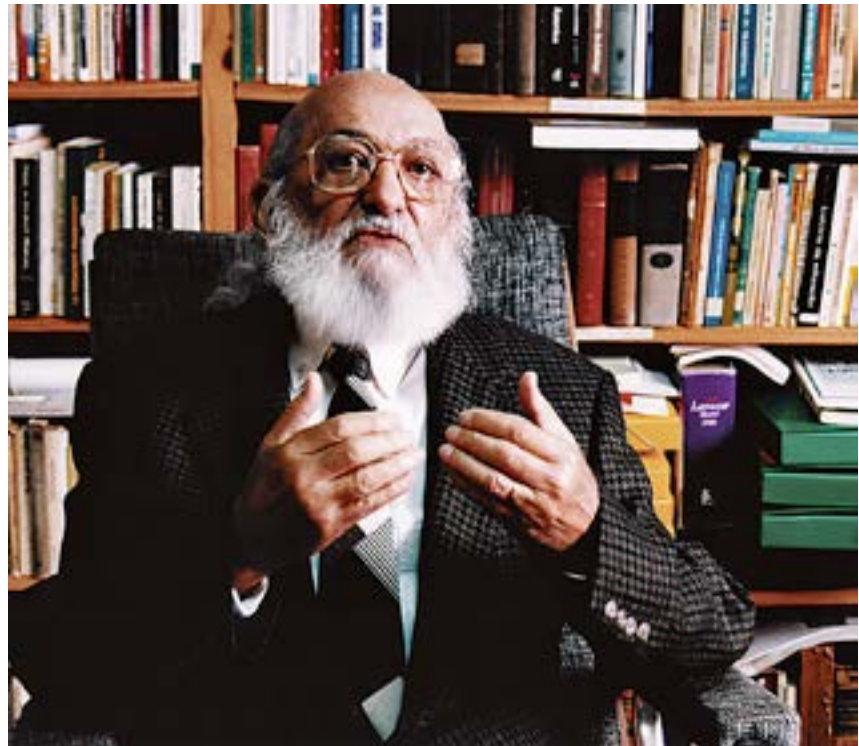
When he arrived at Mackenzie that morning, Freire was unable to walk to the auditorium. He was deeply moved. He stopped in front of the gardens and, with tears in his eyes, said:

— *To think that I could die without seeing these beautiful gardens at Mackenzie...*

The scene remains vivid in my memory. Seeing how difficult it was for him to walk, I asked the gardener to bring the small golf cart used for campus maintenance. I sat Freire in the seat and, as I drove him slowly along the tree-lined paths, he smiled and commented, with his characteristic tender humor:

— *My head is fine, but my legs are weak.*

When he finally arrived at the auditorium, he was greeted by a reverently silent audience. Professors, administrators, students, and staff stood up to applaud. Freire looked at the audience kindly and began his speech without formalities.



He spoke of ethics as the foundation of teaching, of the need for courage and hope to teach, of love as the basis of the pedagogical act. He repeated emphatically: *"Teaching requires joy, hope, and decency. Teachers who do not believe in their students' abilities betray education itself."*

It was no ordinary conference. It was an encounter between history and utopia. The space that had once rejected him now revered him, and the university, at that moment, seemed to reconcile itself with freedom of thought.

At the end, he said to me, moved: *"It was good to come! It was necessary to return here. Fear and silence cannot be the last word."*

I was deeply moved. That reunion, mediated by friendship, sealed by the conference, and crowned by tenderness, was a true intertwining of affections: the moment when thought

A few days later, Paulo Freire would leave us. Pedagogy of autonomy would be his loving farewell and his last lesson.

becomes body, body becomes word, and word becomes hope.

A few days later, Paulo Freire would leave us. Pedagogy of autonomy would be his loving farewell and his last lesson. For me, that day, April 10, 1997, became a personal and historical milestone: the moment when life granted me the privilege of guiding one of the world's greatest educators through the avenues of Mackenzie and learning, once again, that pedagogy is only alive when it is loving, and that ethics is the soul of teaching.

FROM ASTONISHMENT TO HOPE

Between my initial astonishment and the tenderness of our reunion, my journey as an educator and researcher took shape. From Paulo Freire, I received not only intellectual stimulation, but also an ethical invitation to experience education as a political and loving commitment to the world.

The epistemological epiphany awakened me to social reality and taught me to read Brazil in all its contradictions. The construction of Critical Pedagogy led me to understand that the act of educating is not neutral, but loaded with political choices and values. And the intertwining of affections showed me that critical thinking is not fundamentally about acceptance and solidarity, and that any pedagogy that aims to be emancipatory must be born of shared affections and new and continuous utopias.

Today, I understand that these two encounters with Paulo Freire were more than just episodes: they were processes of existential and epistemological formation. The first encounter revealed to me the need to think critically; the second confirmed the urgency of living coherently with what one thinks.

Freire has been present in every day of my life as an educator, whether in my reading, conversations, concerns, and, above all, in the ethics of my practice. He taught me that education is always a political act and that pedagogy, if it wants to remain true to itself, must assert itself as a critical science of educational practice.

I learned from him that hope is not waiting, but acting; it is not believing naively, but fighting lovingly. That is why every teaching gesture, every research project, every text, and every training course I have undertaken since then bears, albeit silently, the mark of Freire, the mark of someone who believed in the transformative power of words, dialogue, and love.

Paulo Freire left us a few days later, but his presence has never left us. It remains as a horizon and a commitment: to make pedagogy an act of courage and resistance, and to insist on keeping alive the critical hope that drives the dream of a more just and humane Brazil.

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PAULO FREIRE DURING HIS EXILE IN CHILE

L. MARCELA GAJARDO J.

George C. Stoney (1916-2012), an American filmmaker and professor, traveled to Chile to document Paulo Freire's experience in exile and expand on debates initiated in Recife. Although he did not finish the documentary, his film captured important episodes of Freire's work in Chile (1964-1969) and interviews with professionals connected to the projects of ICIRA, the Institute for Training and Research in Agrarian Reform¹. At that time, Paulo didn't have a beard. His beard grew after he left Chile.

RUMORS

Although technically and politically consistent, there are rumors that, during the presentation of the documentary at the Institute for Latin American Studies at UCLA, an acquaintance interrupted the session claiming that this was not the real Paulo Freire, but rather a creation of Chilean neoliberals. Stoney was dis-

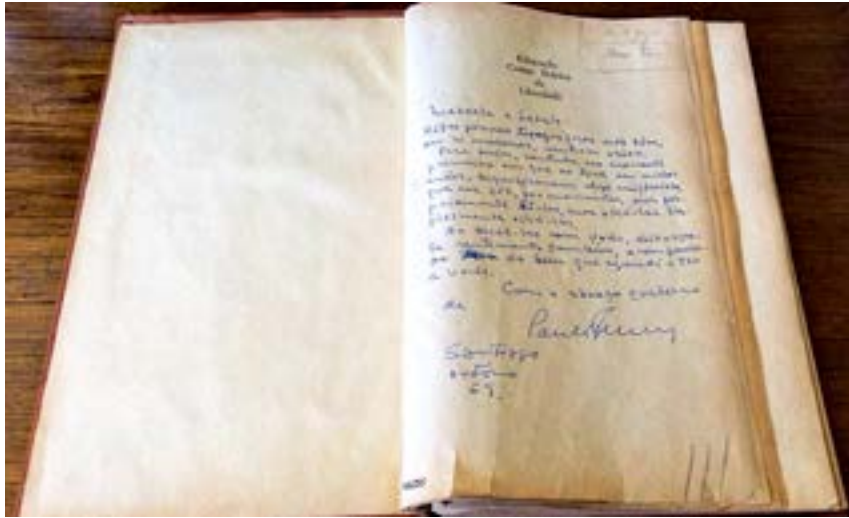
concerted, especially when he saw his critics replace his video with another in which Paulo appeared with the long white beard of a Northeastern prophet. "This is the real Paulo Freire," they allegedly said. The video was shown to Stoney, who only wanted to highlight Freire's work with the Chilean people. The film was recovered by researchers interested in the history of the origin and evolution of Paulo Freire's political ideas and pedagogical work².

From those times, I still have several gifts that Paulo Freire gave me when he left, first for Harvard as a visiting professor, and later for Geneva as an education specialist for the World Council of Churches. Among these gifts are the proofs of the first edition of "Education as a Practice of Freedom," as well as the table and bookshelves from Paulo's small office in Santiago, where he lived after being expelled from Brazil. On that table, he



¹<; George C. Stoney. 2002. Paulo Freire's Experience in Chile 9/64 -2/69 as remembered by some who collaborated with him. www.youtube.com/educacionydesarrollo

². Gajardo, M. 2019. PAULO FREIRE. Crónica de sus años en Chile. EBook. Flacso-Chile. www.academia.edu



Proofs of *Education as a Practice of Freedom*, published by Paz e Terra Editores, Brazil, 1967. A farewell gift dedicated by Paulo Freire to Marcela Gajardo on the occasion of her departure for Harvard in the fall of 1969.

I met Paulo Freire in early 1966, when I was still studying Education at the Catholic University of Chile.

revised the proofs of "Education as a Practice of Freedom" (1965) and wrote the final version of "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (1968), his most famous book. In addition, there were various materials aimed at empowering farmers, training educators, debating literacy and adult education as civic tools, and formulating critiques of traditional schooling. Later, several of these works were published and translated into different languages, such as "¿Extensión o Comunicación? (1968)" and "Sobre la Acción Cultural" (1969), a collection of texts prepared by Paulo Freire that he asked me to organize, edit, and introduce as part of my responsibilities as one of the research assistants at ICIRA.

The 1960s marked Paulo Freire's clean-shaven phase, amidst the Revolution for Freedom in Chile, civil rights in the USA, European social

democracy, the Cold War, and the Cuban, Chinese, and French Flower³ Revolutions. It was in this context that I became close not only to Paulo, but also to many Brazilians exiled between 1964 and 1973.

THE FIRST ENCOUNTER

I met Paulo Freire in early 1966, when I was still studying Education at the Catholic University of Chile. I participated in workshops for literacy teachers and educators connected to the National Adult Literacy Campaign, launched in 1965 during the government of Eduardo Frei Montalva. I attended lectures by Freire at the Ministry of Education, discussing the "Paulo Freire Method" and its adaptation to Chile. Later, I joined the team at the Institute for Research, Training and Agrarian Reform (ICIRA), collaborating in the production of training materials and cultural research with the peasants settled in an agrarian reform building. My friendship with Freire continued after his departure from Chile, especially during my postgraduate studies in England (1970-72), when I accompanied him to international conferences, such as the one in Bergen, Netherlands⁴, organized by the World Council of Churches, and educational activities promoted by INODEP and IDAC, in Paris and Geneva, respectively.

Freire was simple, welcoming, maintained deep ties

3. Here, the author uses the expression "Floral Revolution" as a metaphor for the events that took place in May 1968 in France.

4. Seeing Education Whole" (1971), convocado pelo Conselho Mundial de Igrejas e realizado em Bergen Am See, Países Baixos.

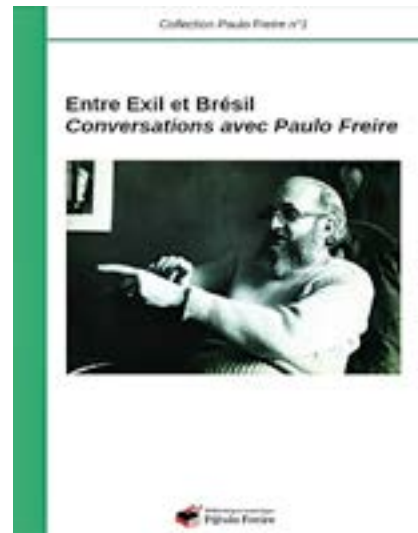
with colleagues, and valued Northeastern Brazilian culture even while living in Chile and Switzerland. His trips to Africa partly alleviated his homesickness and inspired the book "Letters to Guinea-Bissau" (1977), where the author reflects on education between Africa and Europe, seeking to preserve memories of Northeastern Brazil. In Chile, while working at ICIRA, I heard him several times nostalgically recall the typical Recife vendor of banana and guava sweets or comment on his longing for the teachers, artists, academics, and intellectuals who were his partners in educational initiatives in Pernambuco. Among them, Francisco Brennand, a visual artist, and Ariano Suassuna, a playwright and painter, stand out. I came into contact with Brennand's ceramics and was able to visit Ariano Suassuna when I was invited to work at the Pernambuco State Department of Education and Culture in 1978. In my free time, I used to walk around the city, observing the river and the sea that cross Recife, seeking to understand the feelings of an exile like Freire in Chile, so far from his homeland.

BOOKS WRITTEN IN EXILE

Much of Freire's work, "Education as the Practice of Freedom" and "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," was conceived in Chile, a period for which he had great affection. There, he developed the concept of cultural action and broadened his approach to literacy in fields such as school education,

community development, and research. These methods inspired educational campaigns in Latin America, valuing the knowledge of unschooled adults and thematic research in content. Over time, his proposals were disseminated in Peru and Colombia by organizations that adapted his principles to their own contexts. The Catholic Church, after the Medellín Conference, also adopted some of his innovative methodologies. Freire advocated participatory pedagogical processes, in which educators and learners built knowledge together, promoting new educational practices and adapting his method to different political and social contexts.

During his exile, Paulo Freire worked as an intellectual of the Catholic left, addressing political issues with peasants and organizations in Latin America. In Chile, his contact with exiled Brazilian leaders, such as Paulo de Tarso Santos, former Minister of Education, Almino Afonso, former Minister of Labor, Plínio Sampaio, politician and academic affiliated with the FAO, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, sociologist, politician and academic in Chile working for ECLAC, enabled his participation in initiatives such as ICIRA. This program, a partnership between the UN and the Chilean government, supported agrarian reform through research, technical training, and workshops for small farmers and, in the 1960s, brought together Chilean professionals and international experts hired by UN agencies



le site internet Bibliothèque numérique Paulo Freire (<https://www.bibliofreire.org/>) s'est donné comme objectif de référencer, de numériser et de partager librement les travaux de Paulo Freire .disponibles en français.

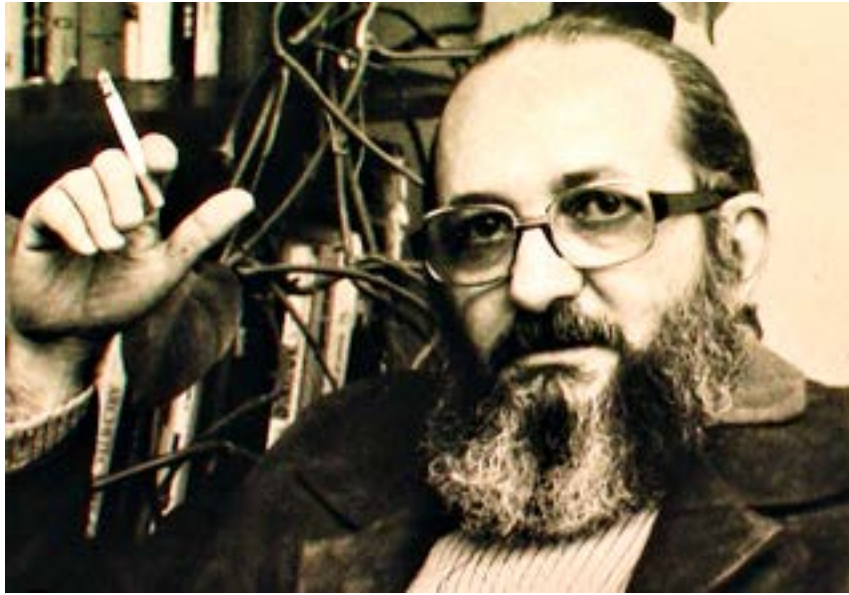
L. MARCELA GAJARDO J.

A sociologist of education, she graduated from the Faculty of Education at the Catholic University of Chile and holds a master's degree in sociology from the University of Essex, England.

Co-founder and former director of the Program for the Promotion of Educational Reform in Latin America (PREAL) (1995-2014), she worked as a senior consultant for UNESCO and the OAS, IDRC and IICA in Brazil.

A visiting researcher at Harvard University (2015-2016), she was a member and president of the Advisory Board of the Global Monitoring Report (GEM), based at UNESCO, Paris (2001-2011) and a specialized consultant for the National Institute of Educational Evaluation (INEE) in Mexico (2014-2019).

Between 1990 and 1995, she was Director of Planning and Studies at the Chilean Cooperation Agency (AGCI, 1990-1995) and is the author of several articles and books on education and development. Currently, she works under the institutional auspices of FLACSO-Chile.



In his autobiographical work "Pedagogy of Hope: A Reencounter with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed," published in 1992, Freire recounts that his time at ICIRA was one of the most productive periods of his exile, attributing this to the intelle...

such as FAO, UNESCO, and ILO.

At this institution, Freire reunited with several compatriots in exile and invited political analyst Francisco Weffort and poet Thiago de Mello, former Brazilian cultural attaché in Chile, to write the prologue to "Education as a Practice of Freedom." Later, he asked Ernani Maria Fiori to write the prologue to "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," acknowledging the authorship of the term "conscientization" to Álvaro Vieira Pinto and other philosophers from the Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies (ISEB). The manuscript of "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" served as the basis for the English translation, revised by Freire himself

at Harvard. Simultaneously, it was translated into Spanish and published by Editora Tierra Nueva, Uruguay, after revision by Freire's team at ICIRA, in 1970. In his autobiographical work "Pedagogy of Hope: A Reencounter with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed," published in 1992, Freire recounts that his time at ICIRA was one of the most productive periods of his exile, attributing this to the intellectual environment provided by the institution and the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues of his generation, among the many Brazilians who worked there. This collective collaboration resulted in two publications that, despite their relevance, became little known in Chile and internationally.

The first was the collection of essays organized by Freire, initially published by ICIRA in 1969 and republished in 1970 and 1972 under the title "Sobre la Acción Cultural" (On Cultural Action)⁵. Ten years later it was revised and published in Brazil as Ação Cultural para a Liberdade (Cultural Action for Freedom)⁶. Originally, these texts served as teaching material for training professionals and providing technical assistance in Chile, Colombia, Peru,

5. Three thematic modules in Sobre la Acción Cultural served to organize these ideas. The first module, entitled "Education as a Dimension of Cultural Action" (pp. 19-51), included "The Banking Conception and the Problem-Posing Conception of Education," "Adult Literacy," "The Practice of the Psychosocial Method," and "Peasants Can Also Be Authors of Their Own Reading Texts." A second module, organized under the title "The Dialectical Movement of Cultural Action" (pp. 52-79), included the texts "Research on the Generating Theme" (pp. 51-66), "Regarding the Generating Theme and the Thematic Universe" (pp. 66-77). A third module, "Cultural Action and Change" (pp. 79-110), included texts more directly related to educational practices carried out within the Chilean agrarian reform process: "Cultural Action and Agrarian Reform" (pp. 79-88); "The Role of the Social Worker in the Change Process" (pp. 88-101); "The Professional's Commitment to Society" (pp. 102-106). www.academia.edu

6. Freire, P., 1979. Ação Cultural para a Liberdade e Outros Escritos. Ed. Paz e Terra, Sao Paulo, Brasil

and other places, being used to train specialists in local planning and rural education methods interested in applying awareness-raising and thematic research in their countries. This period marked the preparation of reports and articles that reflected social transformations in their theoretical approach, later interrupted by political issues, leading analysts to call this moment the "unfinished agenda of awareness-raising".

The second publication was organized by María Edy Ferreira and José Luis Fiori, released under the title "Investigación de la Temática Cultural de los Campesinos de El Recurso" (Investigation of the Cultural Theme of the Peasants of El Recurso), a preliminary report that records the different stages of the study, the historical background of the settlement, the record of initial observations in the community, and the background that served as the basis for the construction of codes and graphs used in research and cultural circles with the peasants benefiting from agrarian reform and small landowners. Paulo addressed the stages of this research in the texts "Investigación de la Temática Generadora" (Investigation of the Generating Theme) and "A propósito del tema generador y el universo tema" (On the Generating Theme and the Thematic Universe)

(1968), present in chapter two of "Pedagogía do Oprimido" (Pedagogy of the Oppressed) and in the collection "Sobre la Acción Cultural" (On Cultural Action). There are other unpublished and scattered materials that have not been compiled into a single work⁷.

In 2021, on the centenary of Freire's birth, José Luis Fiori recalled his participation in research on the world of Chilean peasants, conducted around the same time Freire was writing *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He habitually discussed the chapters with his research team and other colleagues from ICIRA. In 1973, his text was published in a book in Bilbao, Spain, alongside two articles by P. Freire and Ernani Maria Fiori. Revisiting the text after 54 years, Fiori decided to translate part of it, not for its intrinsic value, but as a useful historical record for studies on Freire and as a way to remember and honor Paulo as an unforgettable teacher, a humanist, and a lifelong friend, despite geographical distances and generational differences. This writing highlights Paulo Freire's enduring influence on his life, especially the educator's perennial optimism, and a lesson he imparted when they met: "never be afraid of your own ideas, even when they change over time."⁸

In 2021, on the centenary of Freire's birth, José Luis Fiori recalled his participation in research on the world of Chilean peasants...

7. Ferreira M.E. e Fiori, J.L. 1971. Investigación de la Temática Cultural de los campesinos de El Recurso. ICIRA. Santiago, Chile

8. Fiori, J. L. "Dialéctica y Libertad, relembrando Paulo Freire. Blog setembro 2021 e Dialectica y Libertad. In: Freire, P.; Fiori, E. M; Fiori, J. L. Educación Liberadora. Bilbao: Editora Zero S.A., 1973 19 de setembro de 2021 e Fiori, J.L. Dialéctica y Libertad. Dos dimensiones de la Investigación Temática. En Cristianismo y Sociedad: una contribución al proceso de concientización en América Latina. ISAL., 1968. Montevideo, Uruguay.



DEPARTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES

At the end of 1968, the Chilean government decided not to renew Freire's international consulting contract with UNESCO, accusing him of provoking, in an increasingly radicalized political context, the politicization of certain social groups, especially peasant organizations and urban-marginal networks. Faced with the choice between staying in Chile or leaving the country, he decided to accept a position as a visiting professor at Harvard University. The invitation, extended by the Center for Studies in Development and Social Change, was to work on and debate the theory of cultural action presented in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a book that was already circulating inside and outside the United States at that time. Freire worked as an academic at Harvard for a period of ten months, starting in late April 1969. He gave several lectures

and published two texts in English that served as a basis for extrapolating his theory of the conscientization method to processes of cultural transformation and other disciplinary fields, especially those of theology and politics⁹.

GENEVA

In early 1970, he left the United States and moved to Europe as an education specialist for the World Council of Churches, based in Geneva, where he remained until the end of 1979. As a consultant, he advised ecumenical organizations and groups and chaired several international associations dedicated to promoting social and cultural transformations in diverse contexts. In 1979, some of these texts and other essays prepared for conferences and seminars in the United States and Europe were revised and edited by the author under the title "Cultural Action for Freedom and Other Writings" (1979). From then on, Freire dedicated his activities to Europe, on the one hand, and to Africa, on the other. He worked supporting the governments of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe, advising on various literacy and educational development campaigns in these countries. He returned to Chile on two occasions: in 1972, to meet with Chilean educators and discuss the direction of educational transformation processes and the literacy and adult education policies of the Popular Unity government; and in 1991, to learn about the opinion and attitude of the Christian world towards the social and political changes of the time and to exchange ideas with Chilean theologians about the educational mission of churches in Latin America.

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9. Gajardo, M. Ed. (2025) *The Making of Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Brill

PAULO FREIRE

**A MAN WHO WAS NOT AFRAID TO DIGNIFY LIFE, LOVE PEOPLE,
AND FIGHT TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD**

CESAR NUNES

It is not easy to write about Paulo Freire today. To be even more discerning and honest, it must be said that it is not easy to talk or write about Paulo Freire at any time, whether because of the greatness of his work in the world, the plurality of his reflections and writings, the loving depth of his personality, and his original worldview, or because of the many alienations and untruths, manipulations, and deconstructions in bad faith that have been made about him and his thinking, about his actions in the world, his theoretical and practical work, and his very being.

A KEY FIGURE

Paulo Freire has become a symbol, a key figure in deciphering the political and educational movements and transformations that Brazil has undergone over the last fifty or sixty years. This task, born of a kind invitation from Bernard Charlot to record my experiences with Paulo Freire, is an ho-

norable invitation to forever reconnect with him and his legacy, for his time, for education, and for culture. Paulo Freire was born in 1921 and died in 1997, building a lifetime in a century of radical changes and structural transformations in history.

The difficulty increases when it comes to our desire to define Paulo Freire's historical, political, and human profile, as I have made clear, due to the existence of so many versions and reductionist and implausible narratives that have been constructed about the professor Paulo Freire, especially by conservative and authoritarian groups, most of whom have no idea about his identity, let alone his judicious, profound, original, and rich intellectual and cultural production. It seems that we are always having to defend Paulo Freire, in a certain apologetic attitude, which often ends up falling into partial analysis, counterearguments, contextual elucidation, even if well-intentioned, but which remains



Professor Cesar Nunes with Paulo Freire
(photo from Professor Cesar Nunes' personal collection)

CESAR NUNES

66, has a degree in Philosophy, History, and Education. He is a lecturer in Education, Full Professor of Philosophy and Education at the Faculty of Education at UNICAMP, Brazil, Coordinator of the PAIDEIA Study and Research Group, Director of the National Institute for Research and Promotion of Human Rights, and Collaborating Professor at the University of Coimbra, Portugal, on Philosophy and Human Rights. Orcid Id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3548-9486> Lattes <http://lattes.cnpq.br/8427731174220329> Lattes

ID: 8427731174220329 - Email: cnunes@unicamp.br

distant from a vision of totality that could account for the singular and universal figure of this Brazilian educator and intellectual of the highest magnitude.

THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS PERSONALITY

I will refrain from offering a broad, contextual, and philosophical reading of his legacy and work. There are already many comprehensive studies and rigorous research projects devoted to this task. My intention is to demonstrate, in a testimonial manner, the uniqueness of his affable, welcoming, attentive, humanistic, and good-humored personality, which was pleasant and inspiring, based on my joy and honor of having lived with him for a few years in the 1980s and 1990s, after his return from exile, at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), where Paulo Freire worked as a professor between 1981 and 1991. We also met in political struggles, in educational and popular movements that achieved the re-democratization of Brazil, overcoming the perverse civil-military dictatorship that had exiled him, experienced between 1964 and 1985. At that time, I was studying for a master's degree in Education at the Faculty of Education of the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), and our meeting, at the university and in the social struggles of that decade, was one of those events that change the course of the lives of all

those who seek to understand the world in order to act as agents of transformation and social justice.

I will not write an academic essay, but rather seek to highlight some key points that I consider important to shed even more light on the already well-known Paulo Freire. My hope is that, by the end of this text, my stories and writings will have helped to identify the man, the human being, as the essence of the educator, intellectual, and political and social agent that he was.

Paulo Freire was a skilled storyteller. His classes were moments of enchantment, creative inspiration, and a clear demonstration of his vast and humble erudition, without snobbery or any manifestations of academic pedantry or sterile conventionalities. Not only in his classes, moments in which he seemed to transcend himself, but also in everyday life, in the parking lot, in the corridors, in the cafeteria, in the garden, his presence was emotionally marked by an ineffable joy. Being able to listen to his conversations in the cafeteria, at the sugarcane juice and coconut water stand, in the restaurant, in the hallways or classrooms of the Faculty of Education, in the Basic Cycle building of the young São Paulo university, UNICAMP was undoubtedly a gift from life and history. I am very proud of the directors of the Faculty of Education at UNICAMP,

and I would like to note here the thoughtful gesture of Professors Antonio Muniz de Rezende and Pedro Laudinor Goergen, who signed the initial and subsequent contracts so that Paulo Freire could be a professor at the newly created Faculty of Education. This was the first intense moment of our meeting of lives and worldviews, and the starting point of our affectionate relationship.

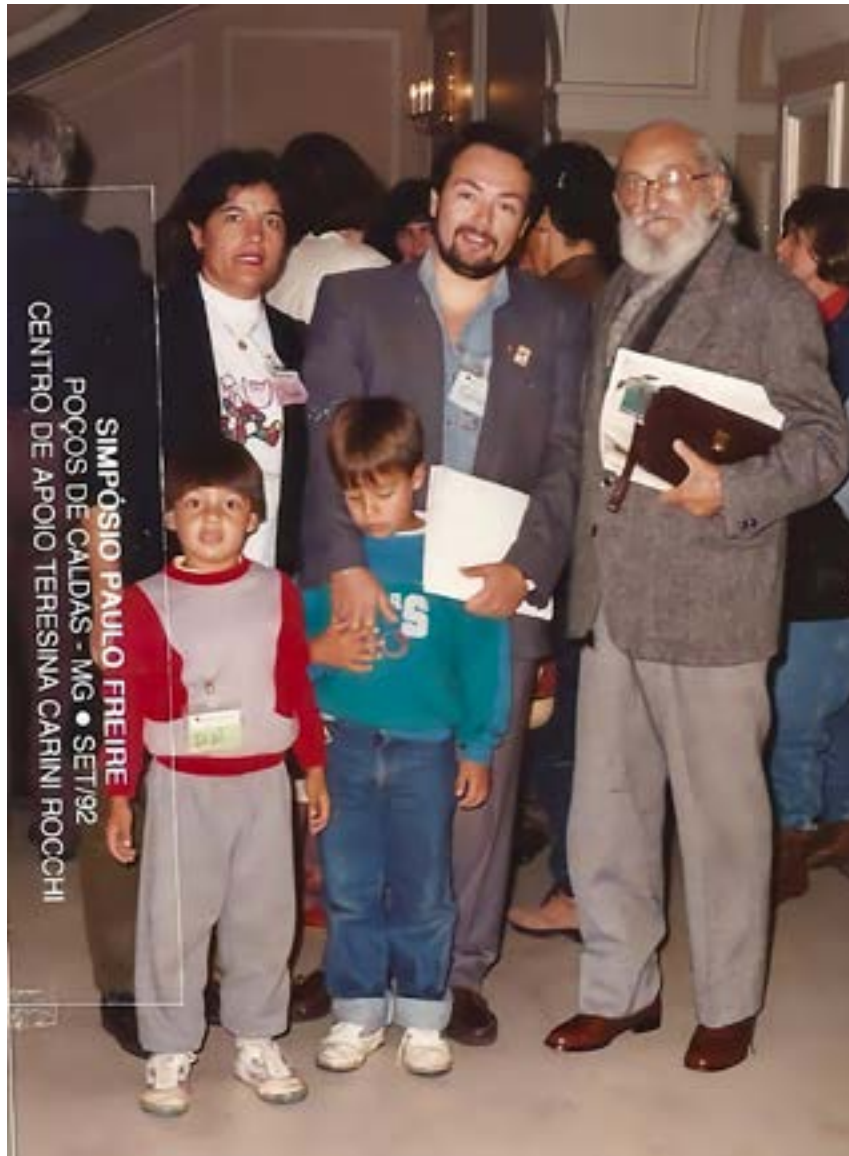
FIVE UNIQUE EXISTENTIAL SITUATIONS

I have prepared this short text to record five moments, five unique existential situations, seemingly commonplace, from my time with Paulo Freire, but which reveal, I dare say today, the magnitude of his fully realized humanity! Memory is one of the most important dimensions of our lives, as we all know. This is a conviction that takes hold of our existence over the years, magnetized by intellectual and emotional maturity, which grows stronger in our hearts and minds. But despite those who believe that memory is merely a factual recollection of the events we have experienced, I have sought to counter this with another understanding of memory: it is not just a cold or impartial recollection of an event, it is much more than that, it is an interpretative reconstruction of the facts and events we have experienced, an effective exercise in existential and social hermeneutics. For

when we remember facts, we do so with our cumulative life experience; when we write about these facts, we already know the unfolding of many things that took place beyond the facts and events themselves; we already understand the paths of all the lives, people, and processes in which our memories have placed us.

As a first interpretative approach, I would say that Paulo Freire was an original, loving, and fearless person, in the ontological and political sense of these expressions. He was never tired of saying that he loved the world, that he loved life, and that he loved people. His recurring statements struck a chord in the heart of a 25-year-old woman who was passionate about Paulo Freire and his almost mythical figure, cherished in the resistance, in the task of “loving and changing things,” as another great artist from the Brazilian Northeast, Belchior, sang. It was not common for anyone to talk about “love” at the university, in the social struggles, and in the political confrontations of that historic moment. The words that rocked us in the formation of popular movements confronting the military dictatorship and conservative groups in the country were “liberation,” “oppression,” “resist, occupy, produce,” “confront.” Paulo Freire gave new meaning to the appropriation of the word and feeling we recognize as “love,” in the

As a first interpretative approach, I would say that Paulo Freire was an original, loving, and fearless person, in the ontological and political sense of these expressions.



Professor Cesar Nunes and his family, with Paulo Freire (photo from Professor Cesar Nunes' personal collection)

sense of an omnilateral understanding of human dignity and diversity, as an axiological construct of a revolutionary politics and culture.

His first speech upon returning from exile, still at the Campinas airport, where we were all waiting for him, full of hope, already had an immeasurable impact on me. We sang along with Elis Regina, "(...) who dreams of the return of Henfil's brother, of many people who

left, in a rocket tail," referring to the return of exiles after the approval of a questionable amnesty. All the other exiles we accompanied on their return to Brazil in the early 1980s always repeated the same argument that Brazil had fallen behind the rest of the world, that they, the returnees, were the bearers of the country's modernization and updating. Paulo Freire turned this argument on its head when he climbed onto a chair and proclaimed to all of us, who were looking at him with eyes brimming with utopian dreams: "I am here to relearn Brazil!" This statement resonated with us students, who repeated in unison: "Paulo Freire, Paulo Freire: freedom and struggle!" The dying dictatorship would still last for another half decade, but we were no longer alone. The figure of Paulo Freire welcomed us and encouraged us to take our history into our own hands. This memory stirs in me the struggles and hopes we carried together.

Another moment full of lessons, which I will never forget, took place in the library of the Faculty of Education, still improvised, in the UNICAMP Basic Cycle building. I had been tasked by the director of the Faculty of Education, who was my master's advisor, Professor Pedro Goergen, with transporting—picking up and taking—Professor Paulo Freire to São Paulo a

few times a month, in addition to the days when he took the bus that connected UNICAMP to USP and PUCSP, called "Massa Crítica [Critical Mass]."

CONVERSATIONS WITH PAULO FREIRE

I was extremely touched and happy to be the seasonal driver who took Professor Paulo Freire to and from his university classes. My glory was overwhelming; I had never imagined such a situation. It was a source of pride and joy, created by the generosity of my master's advisor and the arbitrariness of life itself! I never imagined that the great author of the texts we read in clandestine copies, printed on an alcohol mimeograph in the pastoral sacristies of churches, which ignited in us the hope for a more just world, was there, sitting next to me, traveling along the busy Anhanguera highway. I talked with Paulo Freire on the Anhanguera Highway, on my trips to and from São Paulo. I truly believe that I laid the reflective foundation for my master's degree in Education in our conversations on the Anhanguera, during our stops for coffee and sugarcane juice, before I actually, publicly, defended my dissertation!

When I picked him up at the library, intending to return quickly to meet up with the other colleagues at the student parties, I asked him if he could move up our departure time, claiming that there would be heavy traffic pro-

blems entering and leaving São Paulo. To which he replied calmly and serenely: "*Cézinha (that's what he called me), you're too anxious, calm down.*" I sat quietly in a chair, away from the table, and he continued reading a small book. Paulo Freire was a man who read a lot. He was always commenting on a book, a newspaper article, or a publication, and, to my delight, he liked to watch Brazilian soap operas, especially "*O Bem Amado*", by Dias Gomes. After 40 or 50 minutes, he closed the book and asked me: "*Cézinha, do you see these books here on the shelf?*" I replied: "*Yes, Professor, they are bound master's dissertations.*" He continued, "*Do you see these books and texts on the top shelf?*" I replied again, "*Yes, Professor, they are doctoral theses!*" And he added, "*That's right, Cézinha, at night, when the lights go out, the smell of paper attracts moths to this place to devour the paper, and they get in everywhere they can; and they get in everywhere they can. But, walking over some dissertations and theses, the moths themselves refuse to eat them, because they were written without soul, without transformative intent, produced only for institutional bureaucracy and meaningless academic climbing.*" I stood still, stunned by the force of his statement, to which he concluded, grabbing my arm and shaking it frantically, saying: "*You, young man, when you come to write your dissertation, or a thesis, or a book, always seek to carefully identify a specific problem in social reality that causes you discomfort,*

But, walking over some dissertations and theses, the moths themselves refuse to eat them, because they were written without soul, without transformative intent, produced only for institutional bureaucracy and meaningless academic climbing.

I was stunned by the grandeur of this statement, which taught me to understand the dialectic of political confrontation and ideology in all spheres of daily and public life...

try to see something that needs to be clarified and deciphered, one of the countless causes of human suffering, subjective and social. Take this problem, turn it into a research problem, elevate it to theory, bathe it and cross it with theory and studies, then bring the conclusions to reality, indicating a path, an action, a direction, for the good of life and people. Light a light, a torch, a lantern. Science exists to alleviate human suffering, which we know was mostly socially produced and can be scientifically deciphered and clarified, and then politically transformed." It was a few chaotic minutes that changed my worldview, altered the meaning of my existence, and definitively led me to understand science as a social practice of understanding and transforming human reality, subjective and social, singular, and communal. Even now, the memory of this paradigmatic event, didactically reproduced here, envelops me in pleasant emanations of vivid feelings and unexpected nostalgia.

THE DIALECTIC OF POLITICAL CONFRONTATION

Another reinterpreted memory concerns a trip we used to take from São Paulo to Campinas, always with a tight schedule, to arrive at the campus on time. On the way, we made a short stop for coffee, as was our habit. When we returned to the car, Professor Paulo Freire turned to me and said: "*Cé-zinha, not a single day of my life has passed, as an adult and participating citizen of*

my time and society, without someone accusing me of being what I am not, of saying what I did not say, and of thinking what I do not think."

I was surprised by this statement, because in an instant I could see Professor Paulo Freire demonstrating full awareness of all the absurd accusations and blatant falsehoods that were said about him, fueled by conservative groups and agents, especially in that electoral context at the end of the military dictatorship and its difficult and demanding transitional process. But at the same time that I thought this, Paulo Freire, with a simple and welcoming smile, continued: "*But not a single day of my life has passed without me responding sovereignly to these accusations, affirming that I am not what they say, that I do not think what they want me to think, and that I do not say what they want me to say! Even in conflict, I speak out, stripped of aggression, we must be revolutionary in content and form!"*

I was stunned by the grandeur of this statement, which taught me to understand the dialectic of political confrontation and ideology in all spheres of daily and public life. It taught me to challenge, to clarify, to respond, without capitulating and without attacking. I have sought to repeat or recreate this lesson with my students when they surround me in the hallways,

at the classroom doors, with affection and unmistakable looks of admiration, just as I did with my teacher and friend Paulo Freire.

As I draw on my revisited memories to write these lines, recalling the importance of that brief but intense period of working alongside Paulo Freire, for the sake of public record, I remain certain that his legacy and personality transcended his uniqueness and his own time. They inscribe him in history, in the cultural and political resistance fought in the 20th century, in the gestation of democracy and social justice, in Brazil and in the world, primarily in the field of the social practice of education. Today, as I listen to tributes and speeches about Paulo Freire, marked by concise and profound phrases and premises that categorically express his thinking and worldview, I feel immeasurable joy.

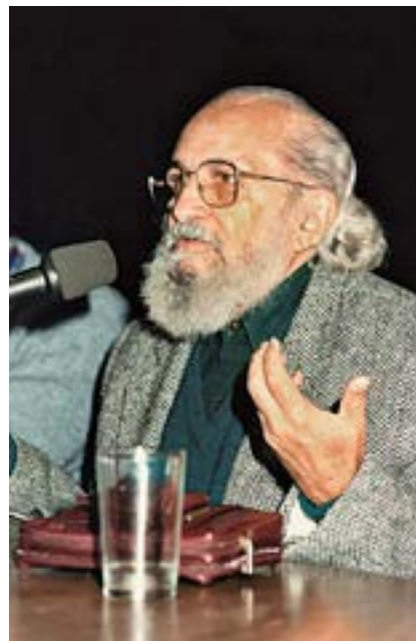
And finally, if I may, I would like to mention one last situation. When I welcomed him to the Campinas City Council for the creation of the Paulo Freire Diploma of Educational Merit in 1996, a year before his sad passing, after his speech at the Tribune, always brilliant, didactic, and thought-provoking, I embraced him as he descended from the podium, grateful for having given me the infinite greatness of his presence in that situation, and I said to

him: *“Professor Paulo Freire, how I admire and love everything you say, everything you speak and do”*

– I had already incorporated an organic appropriation of the social ontology of the meaning of love. He remained hugging me for a few minutes, because Paulo Freire was a man of hugs, (one day I will write a book with this title, because I already have the title—Paulo Freire, the educator of hugs), he replied: *“Cézinha, we only admire in others what our hearts are already full of, what they already contain within themselves. It is just recognition. You admire in me what is already in your heart!”*.

He didn't need to say anything else. It was our last meeting; after that, I only saw him on the day of farewells, at his funeral. But, as the disciples of Emmaus said, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road? (Luke 24:32)”. With an imaginary hug, I express my gratitude to Paulo Freire! Hail!

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They inscribe him in history, in the cultural and political resistance fought in the 20th century, in the gestation of democracy and social justice, in Brazil and in the world, primarily in the field of the social practice of education...

TRIBUTE

SHORT TESTIMONIAL ABOUT PAULO FREIRE

CELSO DOS S. VASCONCELLOS



My relationship with Paulo Freire¹ has several complementary facets: reader of his work, student, participant in meetings and lectures with him, "interlocutor" in my school and teacher training practices, "neighbor," secretary of education, friend of his friends, partner in some activities and, after his death, "self-summoned" to reinvent his work, in addition to being invited to speak and write about his legacy. Below, I offer a brief account of some of these diverse moments.

CONTACT WITH HIS WORK

My first contact with Paulo Freire's work was not in academia, but in social movements, more precisely in 1977, when I read an excerpt from "*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*" on a mimeographed paper that still smelled of alcohol, on a Saturday night, at the headquarters of the OAF

(Organização de Auxílio Fraternal) [Fraternal Aid Organization], before we went out on our rounds in downtown São Paulo (where tea, snacks, and blankets were distributed, if necessary, to the homeless).

I was 21 years old and a first-year student in the Electronic Engineering program at the Polytechnic School of the University of São Paulo, and I had already been a teacher at the Lauro Gomes Industrial Technical School in São Bernardo do Campo, where I had graduated from the Electronics Technician program in 1974. I was in a process of metanoia, of "turning left," of unveiling a reality that, until then, as a product of the "Brazilian economic miracle" (electronics technician, starting engineering) and participating in a very elitist and conservative Catholic youth movement, had been spared.

1. I can't just call him Paulo, since I wasn't that close to him.

A little later, with a group of friends who were taking the Theology for Lay People course at CEVAM (Centro de Evangelização Missionária) [Center for Missionary Evangelization] in Vila Carioca, São Paulo, we returned to reading *“Pedagogy of the Oppressed.”*

“Ciço” COURSE

After leaving engineering (1979), going to the Franciscan seminary in Guaratinguetá, leaving the seminary after a short period, and returning to São Paulo (1980), in 1983 I was taking the last courses in the Philosophy program at Faculdade Nossa Senhora Medianeira. I worked in the mornings as an educational coordinator at the Imaculada Conceição-Imaco Teaching Institute and in the evenings as an educational advisor and teacher at Colégio São Luís. I was taking an elective course in the Pedagogy program with Prof. Selma Garrido. In one of the classes, she announced a course with Prof. Paulo Freire (and guest lecturers): *“Political, Social, Economic, and Cultural Dimensions of Education through the Reading of Ciço.”* I was very interested! The course ran from May 3 to

June 14. Meeting Paulo Freire in person was very exciting. The meetings were fantastic! We read the text “Ciço” by Carlos Rodrigues Brandão, and after each section, we stopped to discuss it. Sometimes we spent the whole night discussing a single paragraph. One night, we had a big surprise: Brandão himself was there. Imagine the magic of a course like this! Well, on one of the days of the course, Paulo Freire mentioned that he needed a place for the CEEed-Center for Studies in Education (soon to be called Vereda), which he and some friends had recently founded. I spoke with the director of Imaco², Prof. Luiz Pierre, who provided a room on the first floor of the school for Vereda.

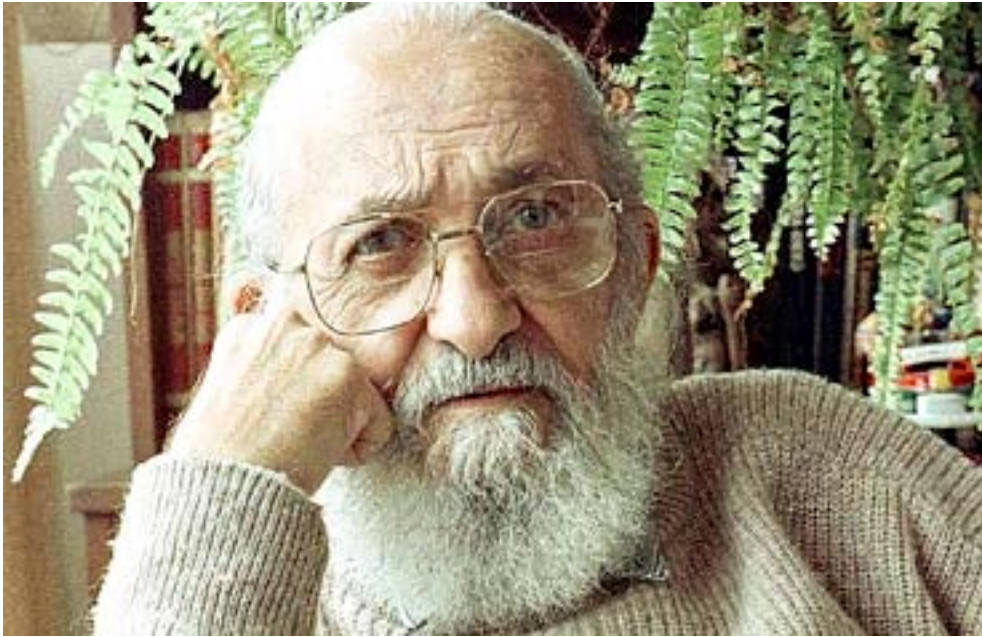
“NEIGHBOR”

The period when I was closest to Paulo Freire was precisely when Vereda's headquarters were set up at Imaco, where I was educational coordinator (and later director), and he stayed there from mid-1983 until the end of 1988³. He thus became our “neighbor,” since we would occasionally run into him in the hallways. I participated in various study activities at Vereda with

We read the text “Ciço” by Carlos Rodrigues Brandão, and after each section, we stopped to discuss it. Sometimes we spent the whole night discussing a single paragraph.

2. Capuchin Friars School, in the Bela Vista neighborhood of São Paulo, which had lay leadership.

3. Recently, through Professor Andreia Queiroga Barreto, daughter of José Carlos and Vera Barreto, close colleagues of Paulo Freire at Vereda, I had access to a copy of the letter, dated November 28, 1988, addressed to me as director of Imaco, thanking me for lending the space for Vereda's headquarters, signed by Paulo Freire. It was very moving!



said, meetings with Paulo Freire in the corridors of Imaco. They were two educators for whom I had (and still have) great admiration and deep respect. At that time, however, the clash between the educator's "technical competence" and "political commitment" was still strong in academic circles, and the biased way in which it was conducted in

intellectuals⁴ from many fields of knowledge (which reveals, once again, Paulo Freire's strong curiosity). He treated us to several meetings with our high school students (which he enjoyed very much), as well as with our teachers and the educational community.

DEATH OF ELZA

On October 24, 1986, Elza, Freire's first wife, passed away. I was a student of Dermeval Saviani in the master's program in History and Philosophy of Education at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo and, at the same time, I had, as I

some circles went too far and gave the impression that Saviani and Freire were "mortal enemies." I believe that the controversy, although originally in the theoretical field more related to Saviani, ended up being used to attack Paulo Freire, insinuating that he preached the "educator-politician" but did not value school and knowledge very much. This bias is completely unfounded⁵. Just look, for example, at the work "Community Outreach or Communication?", which I comment on below.

Well, to my surprise and joy, who did I see at the cemetery? Dermeval Saviani, in so-

4. It was there that I met Prof. Moacir Gadotti, whose special student I was in the subject "Philosophy of Education" in the Graduate Program in Supervision and Curriculum at PUC/SP during the first semester of 1984. He is a professor who had a profound impact on me. In the first editions of the text "Boniteza de um Sonho" (The Beauty of a Dream), to my great satisfaction, although knowing that it was irrelevant and a total exaggeration, Gadotti referred to me as "one of Paulo Freire's best students." When the text was turned into a book, this reference disappeared. Not long ago, in a conversation, I joked that he had regretted it, to which he argued that it must have been the editor's doing. In fact, what really matters is the privilege of having been a student of Paulo Freire; that was something wonderful!

5. Paulo Freire was criticized practically his entire life. To the right, he was a communist, atheist, Marxist, subversive, a danger to the nation, etc. To the left, he was a Christian, liberal, Hegelian, idealist, non-directive, spontaneous, a proponent of the Escola Nova movement, concerned only with popular education, etc.

lidity with Paulo Freire's pain, unmasking that whole artificial construct of "irreconcilable quarrel"!

My intention in making this record, something totally subjective (my surprise and joy at the cemetery when I saw Saviani), is to help overcome petty squabbles that may persist today and, beyond healthy differences of opinion, to point to what matters and unites us in the progressive camp: Another World and Another Education Are Possible!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH OR COMMUNICATION?

One of the things that always enchanted me was Paulo Freire's constant passion for knowledge, which is also my greatest passion. In his dialogues, he often started with politics (which he pronounced with great emphasis and enthusiasm), moving on to ethics, major global issues, etc., but without losing sight of the epistemological, or gnoseological, as he preferred to say, reference: knowledge as an instrument of liberation.

In 1987, from August 17 to 22, I took a community outreach course in "Philosophy for Children" at PUC/SP, taught by Prof.

Marcos Lorieri, in which one of the basic references was the book "Extensão ou Comunicação?" [Community Outreach or Communication?].

In this book, after criticizing the educational tradition of "*transforming the subject into an object to patiently receive content from another,*" Paulo Freire provides us with the epistemological foundations of pedagogical activity, presenting his reading of the dialectical theory of knowledge, as well as its didactic-methodological unfolding, especially problematizing dialogue, since "*without the communicative relationship between knowing subjects around the knowable object, the cognitive act would disappear. (...) Education is communication, it is dialogue.*"⁶

"Community Outreach or Communication?" had a profound impact on my education, in that it combined gnoseological reflection, normally somewhat hermetic and serious, with the praxis of liberating education. Nowadays, with so many fads and demands, this work, unfortunately little known, becomes indispensable⁷ in helping teachers to redefine their activity from its deepest core, enabling consistent

One of the things that always enchanted me was Paulo Freire's constant passion for knowledge...

6. He also works on central themes of his work: awareness, the relationship between thought and language, theory and practice, generative themes, critical hope, the search for greater being, the process of human liberation, etc.

7. I consider this book by Paulo Freire to be fundamental in teacher training because it deals, with great rigor, with one of the basic pillars of teaching practice: working with knowledge. How can educators develop emancipatory practices if they do not even understand how the process of knowledge occurs?



PROF. CELSO DOS SANTOS VASCONCELLOS

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articulation between everyday classroom practice, contradictory social demands, and the horizon of a new historical viability.

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Paulo Freire was Secretary of Education (from January 1989 to May 1991) for the municipal school system in the city of São Paulo, where my three children studied at E.M. Padre Manoel de Paiva⁸ during the administration of Luiza Erundina (1989-1992), and where I was a member of the School Board (as a parent). Those were years of very fruitful democratic coexistence, of rich learning experiences for Tiago, Bruno, and Maíra, as well as for my wife and me.

From a pedagogical perspective, a high point was the School Board's approval of the school's participation in the "Interdisciplinarity Project," which provided, among other things, constant collective work and weekly pedagogical meetings at the school, something quite rare at that time in both public and private schools.

In the first semester of 1990, as a member of the Editorial Board of the AEC Education Magazine, I interviewed Prof. Ana Maria Saul, who

was director of the Technical Guidance Directorate (DOT) of the São Paulo Municipal Education Secretariat.

ITAICI

One aspect of Paulo Freire's personality that made me feel very welcome was the union, sometimes somewhat tense, it is true, that he made between his Christian view of the world and his dialectical stance in the face of a reality that cries out for transformation⁹. "My encounter with Marx never suggested that I should stop meeting Christ on street corners!"¹⁰

In 1992, as an educational advisor to AEC/SP, I participated in the General Assembly of the Southern Region I-CNBB, at the Convent of Itaiaci, in the municipality of Indaiatuba/SP, which reflected on education. On June 24, I had the privilege of witnessing Paulo Freire's rich dialogue with the bishops on the problems of education in Brazil. I was so impacted by the force of Paulo Freire's righteous anger and indignation that I immediately published an article in Dois Pontos magazine:

"As Paulo Freire states, one of the things that academia (and

8. This school was recommended to me by my dear friend Olgair Gomes Garcia, who was Director of Early Childhood Education at SMESP at the time. Due to her close relationship with Nita (Ana Maria Araújo, who became Paulo Freire's second wife), she became a close friend of Freire.

9. This tension was also felt in sectors of the church linked to both Liberating Education and Liberation Theology.

10. Meeting between Paulo Freire and educators, organized by AEC/SP, on October 8, 1984, at Imaco.

society) teaches teachers is to detest the smell of the poor, to consider them incompetent, incapable, and indolent by nature. However, education is based precisely on the hope that others can change; if teachers do not have this hope, how can they educate (see the “self-fulfilling prophecies” of failure)?”

DEATH

On May 2, 1997, when I said goodbye to Paulo Freire in the lobby of TUCA-Teatro da PUC/SP, where his body was being laid to rest, I remember talking briefly with his daughter Madalena about the responsibility of all those who admired him to continue his work.

REINVENTING

Paulo Freire remains very much alive and present in my life, reminding me of what he used to say: *“In truth, I cannot separate what I am as a professional from what I have been as a person.”* Some elements of his work are so ingrained in me that it reminds me of and paraphrases the song *“your blood went to the wrong vein”* ... Just two external signs: the training center I created in 1989 is called *‘Libertad’*¹¹ (Freedom), and the name I gave to the concept of education that I seek to synthesize is *“Dialética-Libertadora”* (Liberating Dialectic)!¹²

I do not mean to say that I am a human being of the same stature as him, but that he continues to inspire me to live my *“historical and ontological vocation of Being More,”* as he so often insisted. I really like that question: *“Boy, who were your teachers?”* Paulo Freire, without a doubt, was/has been one of them!

When feeling, thinking, and intervening in the world, some of Paulo Freire's formulations, whether his own concepts or neologisms, or concepts or words already known but which gained new vigor in his speeches, are always present in me: The humanization of man, which is his permanent liberation, does not take place within his consciousness, but in the history that they must constantly make and remake; Joy; Love/Lovingness; Beauty; Awareness of Unfinishedness/Incompleteness/Humility; Criticality; Epistemological Curiosity; Giving the answer without going through the question; Dialectic Humanization-Dehumanization; Dialogue; Dodiscence; Banking Education; Liberating Education; Hope; Ethics; Impregnate/Soak with Meaning; Unprecedented Viable; Thematic Research; Indignation/Just Anger; Reading the world precedes reading the

“In truth, I cannot separate what I am as a professional from what I have been as a person.”

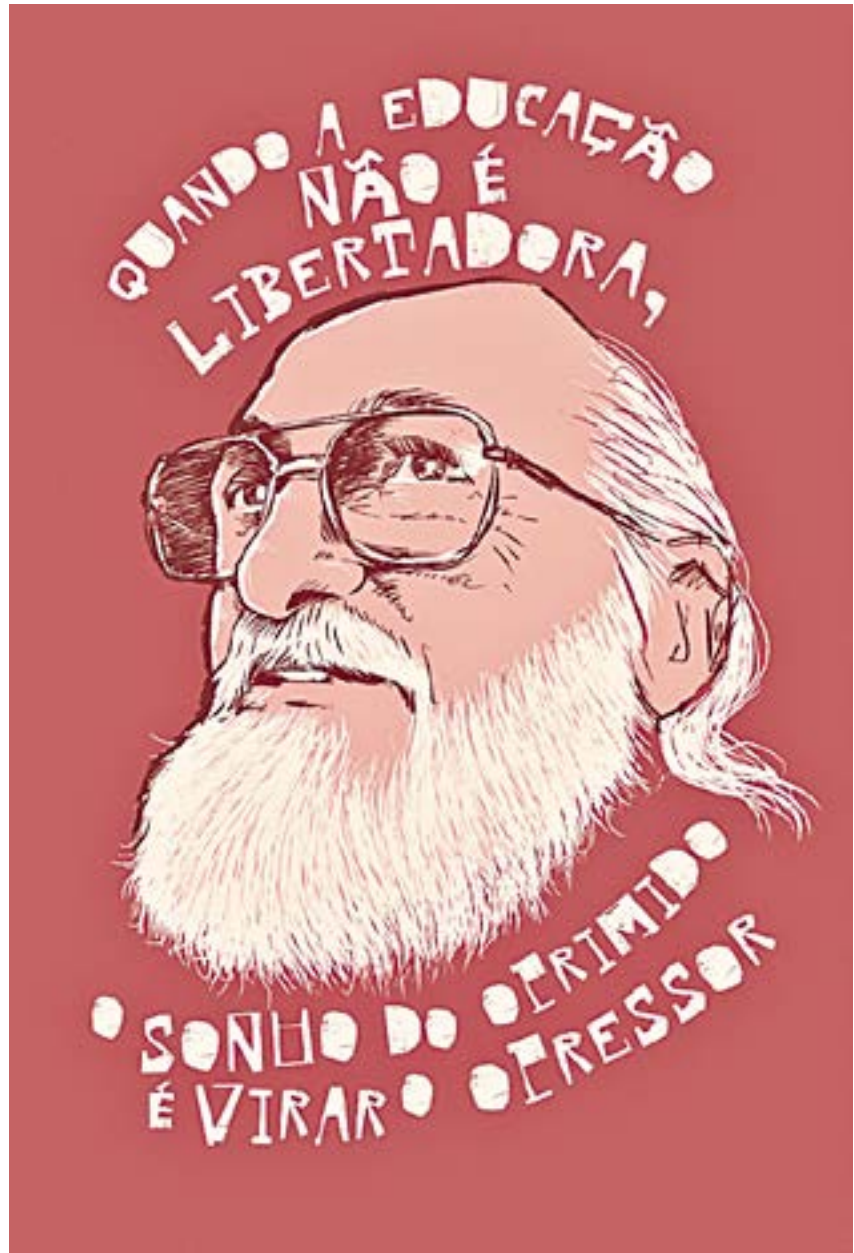
11. Libertad—Center for Research, Training, and Educational Consulting, in São Paulo.

12. Very briefly, the Dialectical-Liberating Conception of Education seeks to concretely articulate the Epistemology (field of knowledge) of a Dialectical Philosophy with the Ontology (field of existence as a whole) of a Liberating Conception of Education.

word; Freedom¹³; There is no education outside human societies and there is no man in a vacuum. (...) From the outset, any search necessarily implies a choice (taking a position, in favor of whom, against whom); No one becomes an educator on a certain Tuesday at four in the afternoon...; No one educates anyone, just as no one educates themselves...; The world is not. The world is becoming; The oppressed hosts the oppressor; Politics; Praxis; Problematization; Rigor/Rigor/Seriousness; Necessary Knowledge; Generative Theme; Theory of Knowledge/Gnoseology/Gnosiological Cycle; Transformation, etc.

Guys, I saw it! More than that, I lived it (and I try to live it)! Paulo Freire lives on in those who radically seek to make education a practice of freedom!

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13. Paulo Freire's first major work was "Education as the Practice of Freedom." His magnum opus, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," deals with the struggle of the oppressed to overcome the denial of freedom. His last work, "Pedagogy of Autonomy," refers to autonomy, which is another name for freedom. Here we can see one of the reasons for the vitality of his work, since freedom is intertwined with the very process of humanization.

WANDERINGS WITH PAULO FREIRE

LES LIENS ENTRE LA FRANCE ET LE BRÉSIL

ANA LÚCIA SOUZA DE FREITAS

Paris/France – Porto Alegre, RS/Brazil, 14.11 – 04.12, 2025.

Dear Matheus Batalha and others interested in the knowledge and the reinvention of Paulo Freire's legacy in France.

[...] Looking back shouldn't be a nostalgic way of wanting to go back, but a way to better understand the present to better build the future. (Freire, 1987, p.73).

The moments we live through are either instants in a previously initiated process or inaugurate a new process, in any case related to something past. That's why I spoke earlier about the "kinship" between lived experiences, which we don't always perceive, thus failing to reveal the fundamental reason for how we experience ourselves in each moment. (Freire, 1992, p.28).

It is with immense joy that I respond to the invitation to write for the *Approches Cooperatives* journal, whose special edition marks Paulo Freire's presence in this

Year of Brazil in France.

In a unique way, the invitation proposes sharing testimonies about Paulo Freire's presence in the life stories of those who lived with him and keep him alive as a reference for understanding/practicing education and teaching as a form of intervention in the world, in the pursuit of creating other possible worlds, in which it is less difficult to love.

Each of the testimonies invites us to get to know the educator through singular narratives, revealing the marks of Paulo Freire's gentleness and its implications in his theoretical work, produced through the valuing of different forms of knowledge and their recognition in the dialogues he engaged in. Taken together, the writings shared in this publication stimulate curiosity to learn about and reinvent Paulo Freire's legacy, adding to the tributes paid throughout this year that emphasize the relevance and vitality of



It was through Paulo Freire that I learned to understand and practice the pleasure of authorship and writing as a form of fight for achievable dreams.

Freire's legacy, as well as the current importance of initiatives that reinvent it in this country.

BETWEEN BRAZIL AND FRANCE

Thank you for the invitation. I am writing this while I am traveling between Brazil and France. This late November and early December period is a time for organizing my life to spend some time in Porto Alegre, my hometown in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Seeking to fill the gaps in my daily routine, I write in this way, on the move, to dedicate myself to this commitment with the attention it deserves. In doing so, it is inevitable to recall the words of Paulo Freire, whose influence on my personal and professional development resonates to this day:

I don't know if those who read this book will easily perceive the pleasure with which I wrote it. I dedicated almost two months to its writing, mostly spending time in my office, at home, but also on airplanes and in hotel rooms. But it wasn't just with pleasure that I wrote this work. I wrote it touched by a strong sense of ethical and political commitment and with a decided concern for the communication I constantly seek to establish with its potential readers. (Freire, 1993, p. 05).

It was through Paulo Freire that I learned to understand and practice the pleasure of authorship and writing as a

form of fight for achievable dreams. However, unlike other people who interacted with him and established personal relationships through study, academic work, and activism, my encounter with Paulo Freire occurred primarily through reading his works. Personally, our meeting happened only once, but it had significant repercussions on my professional experience at the Municipal Education Secretariat in Porto Alegre (SMED), as well as on my academic training in my master's and doctoral studies.

Within the limits of this text, I will use images to express the relevance of the Wanderings with Paulo Freire that are currently taking place in connections between France and Brazil. The first image refers to the context of origin whose concerns led me to study Paulo Freire's work in greater depth.

The image presents a sequence of photos relating to the memorable in-person meeting with Paulo Freire and its repercussions. The autograph in the book "Pedagogy of Hope" (Freire, 1992) made the reading even more precious, a reading I had undertaken without imagining how important Paulo Freire and his work would become in the continuation of my studies and research. Later, the photos taken at this meeting led to a closer relationship with Ana Maria Araújo



Image 1 : The dialogue of knowledge with Paulo Freire in Porto Alegre. Source: Compiled from personal collection.

Freire (Nita), during my participation in the event “*Paulo Freire: ética, utopia e educação*” [Paulo Freire: Ethics, Utopia and Education]”, held by the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS) in 1998, which commemorated the educator's memory on the first anniversary of his death. Paulo Freire's presence at the Porto Alegre meeting is also featured on the cover of the book “*Pedagogia da Conscientização: Um legado de Paulo Freire à formação de professores*” [Pedagogy of Conscientization: A Legacy of Paulo Freire for Teacher Training] (Freitas, 2001), in which I share bibliographic studies conducted during my Master's Degree in Education (PUCRS, 1997-1999) on works published in the 1990s, following his experience as a manager in the municipal education department of São Paulo.

The aforementioned meeting took place in December 1995, when the Municipal Education Secretariat in Porto Alegre (SMED) organized a large event entitled “*Has Popular Education Died? Two Perspectives Reinventing the School*,” a reflection shared with Paulo Freire and Madalena Freire.

My participation, as a member of the SMED's pedagogical team, significantly impacted the continuation of my professional practice, motivating me to pursue academic studies within this challenging context of the experience of constructing and implementing the educational policy of Popular Administration (AP) in Porto Alegre.

AN IMPORTANT REFERENCE

Paulo Freire's readings, especially those concerning his experience as municipal secretary of education in São Paulo between January 1989 and May 1991, were an important reference for the dialogue exercised in the construction of educational policy within the context of participatory democracy in city management.

During four consecutive terms (1989-2004), the Popular Administration produced, theoretically and practically, a legacy of democratic management in the history of municipal education in Porto Alegre, realizing the complementarity between Participatory Democracy and Citizen Education (Azevedo, 2020). Throughout this period, Paulo Freire was present as

“Has Popular Education Died? Two Perspectives Reinventing the School,” a reflection shared with Paulo Freire and Madalena Freire.



a source of inspiration and reference in the face of the challenge of reinventing the school from the perspective of popular education (Freitas, 2021a).

In particular, Nita Freire contributed to the experience of the Porto Alegre Municipal Network, giving the lecture "*Utopia e Democracia: os inéditos-viáveis na Educação Cidadã*" [Utopia and Democracy: the unprecedented-viable in Citizen Education], at the opening of the VII International Seminar Utopia and Democracy in the Citizen School, promoted by SMED, between July 3 and 8, 2000 (Azevedo, 2000). Also in Rio Grande do Sul, she participated as a guest in several editions of the "*Fórum de Estudos: Leituras de Paulo Freire*" [Study Forum: Readings of Paulo Freire]"

THE RIO GRANDE DO SUL FORUM

The Rio Grande do Sul Forum is an annual event held in different locations among higher education institutions, celebrating encounters and updating studies and readings that keep Paulo

Freire's legacy alive. From the beginning, the itinerant format of the event invited its participants to "Wander" throughout the state of Rio Grande do Sul to learn about diverse educational contexts and practices. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the resulting emergency situations of social isolation, and the strong impacts on educational practices, the Forum was suspended for a year in 2020 and held exclusively virtually in 2021 and 2022. Subsequently, in its last three editions (2023, XXIV; 2024, XXV; 2025, XXVI), the "*Fórum de Estudos: Leituras de Paulo Freire*" [Forum of Studies: Readings of Paulo Freire] has been organized in a hybrid format, significantly expanding participation in terms of territorial scope, including France.

It is no coincidence that this writing is titled "*Wanderings with Paulo Freire: Connections between Brazil and France*". Since June 2019, the occasion of a sabbatical year in France has extended beyond what was initially planned, resulting in the publication of the book: "*Andarilhagens de uma educadora pesquisadora: Cartas Pedagógicas e outros registros de participação no Fórum de Estudos Leituras de Paulo Freire*" [Wanderings of a Researching Educator: Pedagogical Letters and other records of participation in the Paulo Freire Readings Study Forum]. Currently in its third edition (Freitas, 2024), celebrating the XXV edition of the Forum, it is an

expanded version of the 2020 publication, including works co-authored by members of the Paulo Freire Readers Collective in France (Freitas; Maior; Baudry, 2023).

THE TIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES

Since 2019, the connections between the two countries through the studies and readings of Paulo Freire have been a growing way of being and living, establishing dialogue with new contexts. Paradoxically, it is from the cultural immersion in Paris that I expand my experiences of shared teaching, in connections between France and Brazil, through the “*Wanderings of Reinventing Pedagogical Letters in Higher Education*” (Freitas, 2021b).

Among others, the following publications are related to the dialogues exercised in writing: “*Varal de cartas pedagógicas: constituir-se pesquisador(a) em educação*” [Clothesline of Pedagogical Letters: Becoming a Researcher in Education] (Stecanela; Bizotto, 2024); “*Cartas pedagógicas: (re)formar(-se) por meio das experiências*” [Pedagogical Letters: (Re)forming Oneself Through Experiences] (Claro, 2025); “*A gestão escolar por meio de cartas pedagógicas*” [School Management Through Pedagogical Letters] (Bairros, 2025).

The results obtained in the Wanderings of Shared Teaching elucidate the growing (self-)demand regarding the

critical act of recording, of which Paulo Freire is an inspiration and reference.

Regarding the term, it is worth highlighting that Paulo Freire became known as a wanderer of utopia due to his 16 years of exile during the military dictatorship in Brazil, a period in which he traveled to various countries where the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1987) became known, in theory and practice. Wandering is also one of the entries included in the Paulo Freire Dictionary:

We are human because we learned to walk. We are human because we learned to oscillate between a “being here” and a continuous “leaving,” going to.” Among those who walk, travel, and wander, there are those who move because they want to (travelers, tourists), those who move because they believe (pilgrims), those who move because they need to (migrants fleeing hunger, exiles), and those who move because they must (the “engaged”—to use a word dear to those of the 1960s—those “committed to others, to a cause”). (Brandão, 2018, p.44).

Wandering through the studies and readings of Paulo Freire has been a way of producing knowledge from one's own practices, through the documentation of experiences in process. Wandering with Paulo Freire, in connections between France and Brazil, has been a permanent challenge to the reinvention of teaching practices,

The results obtained in the Wanderings of Shared Teaching elucidate the growing (self-)demand regarding the critical act of recording, of which Paulo Freire is an inspiration and reference.

In this direction, initiatives to connect the two countries in recent years, promoting knowledge and reinventing Paulo Freire's legacy, have been growing...

in conjunction with research and outreach activities. In this direction, initiatives to connect the two countries in recent years, promoting knowledge and reinventing Paulo Freire's legacy, have been growing.

The second image, shown below, contains the marks of the Wanderings in which the connections between the studies and readings of Paulo Freire in Brazil and France are strengthened.

The image presents the historical series of the 26 editions of the "Fórum de Estudos: Leituras de Paulo Freire" [Forum of Studies: Readings of Paulo Freire], held from 1999 to 2025, in descending order. The first row also includes two events held in France, in line with the experience of the Forum of Rio Grande do Sul. More recently, on September 26, 2025, the Study Day "L'écriture comme expérience émancipatrice : dialogue(s) avec Paulo Freire" [Writing as an Emancipatory Experience: Dialogue(s) with Paulo Freire]" and previously, on September 25, 2023, the Franco-Portuguese-Brazilian Meeting on "Encontro Franco-Luso-Brasileiro de Educação Popular: Pedagogia do Oprimido e Pedagogia da Esperança na contemporaneidade" [Popular Education: Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Pedagogy of Hope in Contemporary Times (Rodrigues; Freitas, 2024), highlight the growing articulation of actions carried out between the two countries.

Notably, the experience of reinventing the Pedagogical Letters as a modality for submitting academic work, originating from the collective experience of the Forum of Rio Grande do Sul, has been present in the events held in France.

Although no French authors have yet contributed to the works presented and published as Pedagogical Letters at these events, the experiences have been fruitful and offer glimpses into future possibilities. Among them is the most recent shared teaching experience with Professor Izabel Galvão, in the course *Les Pédagogies de l'émancipation*, of the Licence en sciences de l'éducation (L3) course, in 2024-2025, at Université Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis. As a final assignment, participants were asked to write a Pedagogical Letter that "expresses the relevance of their thinking on the Pedagogies of Emancipation, establishing connections between their life history and the studies they have undertaken". The authors of this group stand out for contributing to a broader understanding of how Pedagogical Letters, reinvented in the university, are constituting a hybrid genre of writing characterized by simultaneously containing features of personal letter writing and peculiarities of academic writing (Freitas, 2024).

Among other aspects, writing addressed to a specific recipient is a distinguishing



Image 2. Source : préparé à partir d'une collection personnelle

The writing guidance invited participants to look at their experience as students and analyze it from their current understanding, in dialogue with one of the authors studied...

feature of this type of work, whose effects and repercussions have been the subject of investigation, establishing a dialogue between experiences in different contexts. The experience at Paris 8 made a special contribution to thinking about/realizing the emancipatory potential of addressed writing, innovating by bringing it closer to literature. The writing guidance invited participants to look at their experience as students and analyze it from their current understanding, in dialogue with one of the authors studied, chosen as their recipient, such as Amadou Hampâté Bâ, Annie Ernaux, and Daniel Pennac.

THE RELEVANCE OF PAULO FREIRE

Finally, through the shared experiences, I highlight the relevance of Paulo Freire in my training as an educator and researcher, and the continued presence of his legacy in the Wanderings connecting France and Brazil, with an emphasis on the reinvention of Pedagogical Letters in academic training. I wrote this Pedagogical Letter addressed to you, Professor Matheus Batalha, with the expectation that the form will also be content to argue the relevance of Paulo Freire's legacy in supporting the experience of *"ler, escrever e aprender na universidade [reading, writing, and learning at the university]"* [reading, writing, and learning at the university] (Carlino, 2017).

As a professor of educational psychology, you certainly have much to contribute to the dialogue about the letter that Paulo Freire entitled *"Do not let the fear of the difficult paralyze you"* (Freire, 1993). I hope that in some way the reading will spark a desire to continue the dialogue, also in writing.

Before concluding, I highlight for our reflection the words of Paulo Freire, taken as an epigraph. From *"Pedagogy of the Oppressed"* comes the affirmation that [...] *"looking back should not be a nostalgic way of wanting to return, but a way of better understanding what is happening to better build the future"* (Freire, 1987, p. 73). Upon encountering it again in *"Pedagogy of Hope"*, its understanding is updated, adding that *"The moments we live are either instants of a previously initiated process or inaugurate a new process in any way referring to something past"* (Freire, 1992, p. 28); furthermore, he emphasizes: *"That is why I spoke earlier of the 'kinship' between lived times that we do not always perceive, thus failing to unveil the fundamental reason for the way we experience ourselves in each moment"* (Ibidem).

It is in this sense of the historicity of the knowledge produced that the Wanderings with Paulo Freire in connections between France and Brazil corroborate the value of documenting experiences in process and invite others to do so through the writing of Pedagogical Letters.

I conclude this writing in the early hours of Thursday, December 4th, with the sad news of the passing of Professor Bernard Charlot, whose contribution is invaluable due to his vast intellectual output on the relationship with knowledge and his fruitful experience in the collaboration between France and Brazil in the field of teacher training. The irreparable loss of his presence will somehow remain alive through his works, available in both languages.

In reference to his thought, I take my leave, making the memory of his words a simple form of homage: "To be born is to enter a world where one is obliged to learn" (Charlot, 2000, p. 84).

A big hug,

Ana Lúcia Souza de Freitas



ANA LÚCIA SOUZA DE FREITAS

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KEYWORDS

- Wanderings. Paulo Freire Forum. Paulo Freire in France. Pedagogical Charter.

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THE ESCOLA DA TERRA PROGRAM

PROF. MARILENE SANTOS (UFS)

BY MATHEUS BATALHA NERY

The Escola da Terra Program is one of the most important teacher training programs in Brazil. It was established by the federal government through Ordinance No. 570/2013, with the aim of providing specific training for teachers working in rural areas and quilombola communities. In this way, the right to rural education is agreed upon, in a manner that respects and dialogues with the culture, territories, and specificities of rural and quilombola communities. In this interview, we will talk with Professor Marilene Santos, a professor in the Department of Education and coordinator of the Escola da Terra Program at the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), in northeastern Brazil. This interview was conducted by Professor Matheus Batalha, also a professor at UFS. Following the interview, Professors Marilene Santos and Lívia Jéssica Messias de Almeida (UFS) present a report on their experience with the Escola da Terra Program.

Hello, Professor Marilene! First of all, I would like to say that it is a great pleasure to talk to you. To begin with, could you please explain the main objectives of the Escola da Terra Program at the local and national levels?

Hi, Professor Matheus! Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the Escola da Terra Program! This is a very important program for teachers in rural schools in the state of Sergipe! The main objective of Escola da Terra is to ensure continuing education for teachers who work in rural schools and quilombola communities. Continuing education is a right that teachers have, but it is not always guaranteed.

So, the program offers improvement courses (180 hours) and Lato Sensu specialization programs (360 hours) for teachers.

How does the program encourage active participation from the local community, especially teachers who already work or will start working in rural areas and quilombola communities?





Opening of the Third Edition of the Escola da Terra Program at the Federal University of Sergipe – December 2023

... teachers are guided to carry out actions to listen to the community (meetings, plenary sessions, assemblies, among others) to identify topics/problems for study that have been pointed out by the community.

Community participation in schools is one of the principles of Rural Education. Therefore, the training provided through the Escola da Terra Program courses is entirely geared toward helping teachers organize their teaching practices based on listening to the community. As one of the main references for Rural Education is Freirean pedagogy, in the Escola da Terra training, teachers are guided to carry out actions to listen to the community (meetings, plenary sessions, assemblies, among others) to identify topics/problems for study that have been pointed out by the community.

How is the pedagogical approach, especially the collaborative approaches inspired by Freire, reflected in the methodologies used by the program?

As I stated before, the program uses Freirean pedagogy to guide teachers' teaching practices. So, one of the mandatory

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She has experience in the field of education with an emphasis on: Rural Education, working mainly in the following areas: curriculum - literacy - multigrade teaching - youth and adult education, teacher training, teaching practice, educational policy, public policy, culture, ethnomathematics, environmental education, social history of children, children's and youth literature, educational management, and cultural diversity.

activities for those taking the Escola da Terra course is to design and develop a Pedagogical Intervention Project (PIP) or Didactic Project (PP) with a theme related to a community issue in its various aspects (cultural, social, economic, productive, etc.). In communities where one or more teachers are taking the Escola da Terra course, it is very common for parents, grandparents, or community leaders to be invited to speak at the school about specific community issues (problems or opportunities).

How does the Escola da Terra Program seek to discuss contextualized education for rural and quilombola territories, and how does this relate to the idea of liberating education proposed by Paulo Freire?

For us at Educação do Campo, problematizing reality to intervene and transform it takes priority over contextualizing that reality. In this sense, at Escola da Terra, we guide teachers to problematize the reality of peasant and quilombola territories by putting school knowledge at the service of the community to contribute to its strengthening as a peasant and quilombola territory. Knowing the territory, identifying its potential, weaknesses, and possibilities for improving these communities are part of the training that the Escola da Terra Program develops with teachers.

What are the program's strategies for training educators and how do these strategies align with Paulo Freire's pedagogy?



Encontro do Tempo Universidade do Módulo: Planejamento e ação docente nas escolas do campo e quilombolas - Edição 2023

We use Pedagogical Alternation as a strategy in Escola da Terra. In this methodology, the theory-practice relationship should be the guiding principle of the entire program. The different training periods: University Time; School/Community Time are based on the understanding of education/training as a process of reflection, action, and intervention in reality.

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"TEAR DOWN THE FENCE TODAY TO HAVE HOPE FOR TOMORROW"

THE ESCOLA DA TERRA PROGRAM IN SERGIPE

LÍVIA JÉSSICA MESSIAS DE ALMEIDA ET MARILENE SANTOS

Resistance. Territory. Community. Alternating Pedagogy. Agroecology. These were the themes that mobilized the dialogical construction of continuing education for rural teachers in the Escola da Terra (School of the Earth) Program in Sergipe, in northeastern Brazil. The Federal University of Sergipe, the Municipal Secretariats of Education of Sergipe, the State Department of Education of Sergipe, and the Sergipe Peasant Movements have played an important role in the production and implementation of this public policy, articulating community knowledge and practices, academic knowledge, and the historical demands of rural populations in the struggle for land and for equal conditions of access and permanence in public education. Since 2017, the Program has contributed to breaking down barriers by promoting teacher training processes focused on critical, emancipatory, and democratic production, based on the Pedagogy of Alternation, grounded in praxis and Freirean liberating principles.

ADVANCED AND SPECIALIZED COURSE

The Program offers a Professional Development Course and a Specialization Course in Rural Education, but in this brief text we report on the experience of the Professional Development Course, which has proven successful in the context of Sergipe, mainly because the pedagogical organization of the program, born out of peasant movements, responds to the principles of Rural Education and its socio-territorial specificities. The most recent edition of the program took place in 2025 and covered seven municipalities in three micro-regions of Sergipe, with 207 rural teachers from around 32 villages enrolled. The course had a total workload of 180 hours, distributed across six modules, namely:

1. Fundamentals and Principles of Rural Education and Quilombola Communities;
2. Planning and teaching in rural and quilombola schools;





Community weather event in the municipality of Aquidabã in 2017 - First Edition

The pedagogical approach was developed through dialogue, involving teacher trainers, members of peasant movements, program participants, undergraduate students, and community members...

3. Environment and Rural Education;
4. Multi-grade teaching in rural and quilombola schools;
5. Literacy and literacy training;
6. Rural Education and Social Movements Meeting: School of the Earth.

A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH THROUGH DIALOGUE

Each module consisted of 30 class hours, with 20 hours devoted to University Time, held on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and 10 hours devoted to Community Time. The pedagogical approach was developed through dialogue, involving teacher trainers, members of peasant movements, program participants, undergraduate students, and community members, based on debates grounded in their realities and in constant relation to the current situation, so that they could develop educational projects in which rural

subjects were protagonists in the training process and knowledge production. It is worth noting that the trainee teachers were accompanied by teacher-tutors from their localities. In this way, the trainee teachers were accompanied throughout all the processes of the course, both at the university and in their schools and communities.

THE UNIVERSITY TIME

The University Time component of this latest edition included moments of mysticism; dialogical practices based on teaching trajectories in Rural Education; discussion groups based on topics related to community principles and practices; guidance and development of teaching projects; as well as theoretical and analytical deepening of different classroom contexts, based on readings of texts made available in the specific material developed for the course. In Community Time, activities were carried out to diagnose the reality; deepen the readings present in the study material; self-organized meetings by the teachers taking the course for debate and reflection in their communities; as well as monitoring the development and execution of educational projects in schools.

In this context, 33 educational projects were produced, developed, and guided during University Time, and monitored and developed during Community Time in schools and communities.

THE "COMMUNITY TIME"

The Community Time activities allowed for the monitoring and guidance of teacher trainers in dialogue with the communities, ensuring that the projects were rooted in the principles of Rural Education and a Freirian interpretation of reality.

EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS PRESENTED

These projects were presented at the closing event of the course entitled: *"School of the Earth Program: History and Movements of Transformation in Rural Education in Sergipe."* Among the productions developed, the following works stand out, by way of illustration:

- *"From the field to the table: the production of healthy food in rural education"*;
- *"Harvesting flavors and planting knowledge: family farming and its importance in school meals"*;
- *"The Reed Mat as a cultural expression of the village of Aguilhadas: art, identity, and resistance in the countryside"*;
- *"Creole seeds and pink beans: caring, multiplying, and sharing"*;
- *"Red roots: tomato cultivation in Lagoa Seca"*;
- and *"The school as guardian of quilombola memory: knowledge, practices, and ouricuri straw crafts in the village of Alagamar, in Pirambu-SE."*

Finally, we emphasize that the projects developed by participating teachers throughout the Program's existence have unfolded into research initiatives, through which experiences have been mapped that highlight teachers' analyses, their reinterpretations in the daily classroom routine, their interactions with students, and their dialogue with rural communities and movements.

THREE BOOKS

This set of practices and reflections has led to the production of three books that inspire and mobilize hope in rural education, with the following titles:

- *"Programa Escola da Terra em Sergipe"* (The School of the Earth Program in Sergipe),
- *"Escola da Terra: políticas públicas e formação de professores"* (The School of the Earth: public policies and teacher training),
- and *"Experiências na Educação do Campo: diálogos de resistência, (re)invenções e práticas pedagógicas"* (Experiences in rural education: dialogues of resistance, (re)inventions, and pedagogical practices).

Thus, we affirm that the Escola da Terra Program consolidates a formative path that strengthens rural education, promotes teacher autonomy, and reaffirms an ethical-political commitment to liberating educational practices.



LÍVIA JÉSSICA MESSIAS DE ALMEIDA

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PAULO FREIRE: WHEN EDUCATING BECOMES A POLITICAL ACT

HOW CRITICAL PEDAGOGY INFLUENCED SCHOOLS IN FRANCE AND EUROPE

DOMINIQUE BÉNARD

Long confined to education faculties, Paulo Freire's name now circulates far beyond the academic world. In a Europe marked by educational inequalities, debates about authority, the rise of extremes, and questions about the meaning of school, his thinking is resurfacing. Contrary to a strictly utilitarian pedagogy, Freire defended a radical vision: to educate is to transform the world.

But what does his pedagogy really say? And how has it influenced educational practices in France and Europe?

A PEDAGOGY BORN ON THE MARGINS

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian educator from a country then marked by extreme poverty and illiteracy. In the 1960s, he developed literacy methods for adult peasants, who were excluded from the political system because they could not read.

The issue quickly went beyond technique. For Freire, learning to read was not simply deciphering letters: it was

learning to read the world. He started from the daily lives of his students (work, family, injustice, exploitation) to build learning. Education became a space for collective reflection on living conditions and, therefore, a political place in the noble sense of the word. His approach led to his exile after the 1964 military coup. From Chile, then the United States and Europe, his ideas traveled. His most important book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, became a worldwide classic.

AGAINST THE "BANKING" SCHOOL

One of Freire's most famous theoretical contributions is his critique of what he calls banking pedagogy.

In this conception of education, the student is a kind of empty account into which the teacher deposits knowledge. Consequently, the student :

- listens,
- memorizes,
- reproduces,
- without ever questioning.



For Freire, learning to read was not simply deciphering letters: it was learning to read the world.

Freire's pedagogy is not aimed solely at professional integration. It aims at emancipation.

Freire sees this as a relationship of domination: the teacher knows, the student does not. One speaks, the other remains silent.

The school then reproduces social hierarchies instead of questioning them.

In contrast, he proposes a dialogical pedagogy:

- students are not recipients,
- they are thinking subjects,
- producers of knowledge,
- capable of analyzing their reality.
- Knowledge is no longer "transmitted," but co-constructed.

"AWARENESS": LEARNING TO SEE THE MECHANISMS OF OPPRESSION

Freire's central concept: *conscientization*. This is not simply a matter of "becoming aware" in a vague sense, but of learning to:

- identify the mechanisms of oppression,
- understand their social, economic, and political origins,
- recognize oneself as an agent of change.

Freire's pedagogy is not aimed solely at professional integration. It aims at emancipation.

In this context, the teacher is no longer a boss or a mere

entertainer: he or she is an engaged intellectual, responsible for the social effects of what he or she teaches (and what he or she omits).

A WIDESPREAD INFLUENCE IN FRANCE

In France, Freire's work remains relatively unknown to the general public, but it has profoundly influenced several movements.

IN POPULAR EDUCATION

Freire influenced:

- Youth and Culture Centers,
- social centers,
- literacy associations,
- certain trade union movements.

His pedagogy fueled a conception of social animation as a political tool and not simply as an "occupation."

AMONG CRITICAL EDUCATORS

French thinkers such as Philippe Meirieu, Célestin Freinet (already close in spirit), and some researchers in educational sciences have revisited Freire's intuitions:

- the central role of the learner,
- criticism of vertical authority,
- learning through meaning,
- the link between school and democracy.

Even though Freire is not always cited, his influence is ideological: it is visible in discourses on citizenship, participation, and power to act.

AT UNIVERSITY

In France, Freire is mainly studied:

- in education sciences,
- in sociology,
- in political studies.

His ideas circulate among university activists, often in relation to:

- feminist pedagogy,
- decolonial studies,
- criticism of educational neoliberalism.

IN EUROPE: FREIRE, THINKER OF EMANCIPATION

In Europe, its influence is particularly visible:

IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Critical pedagogies inspired by Freire have been integrated into community education programs, social worker training, and projects for low-income neighborhoods.

IN NORTHERN EUROPE

The Scandinavian countries adopted his ideas on:

- participatory schooling,
- school democracy,
- cooperation instead of competition.

IN EASTERN EUROPE

After the fall of the Soviet bloc, Freire was mobilized as an antidote to the old authoritarian pedagogies to rethink:

- citizen engagement,
- critical discourse,
- intellectual freedom.

AN EVER-DISTURBING THOUGHT

Although Freire is celebrated, he is also violently criticized.

His critics accuse him of:

- naive pedagogism,
- excessive politicization of schools,
- a weakening of authority,
- an implicit rejection of classical transmission.

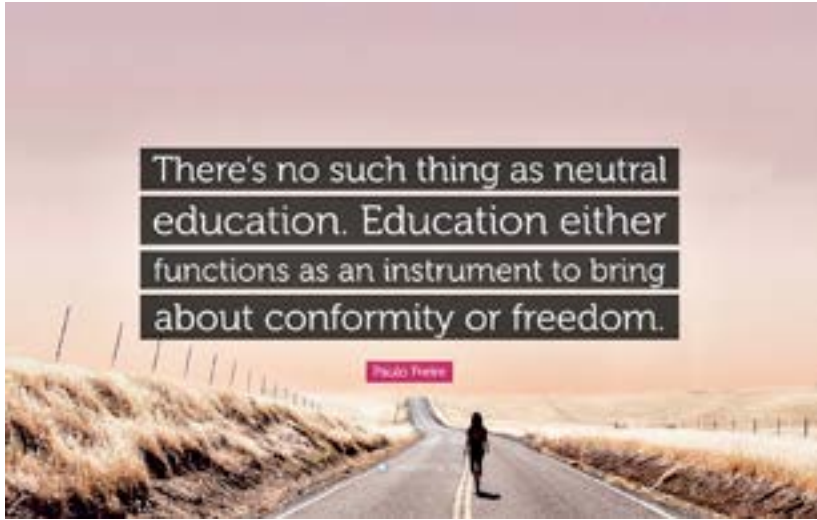
Some policymakers associate Freire with the crisis in Western schools. In Brazil, conservative movements have attempted to ban his teaching. But his supporters point out that Freire:

- never rejected knowledge,
- never denied the need for authority,
- never defended pedagogical chaos.

He questions not the teacher, but vertical omnipotence, not culture, but its use as a means of domination.



His fundamental question remains relevant today: does a school that does not criticize society serve it... or betray it?



FREIRE IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Irony of fate: Freire's thinking is extremely relevant today—in a world he never knew. In times of fake news, polarization, ideological bubbles and the return of authoritarianism, his call to develop critical thinking resonates strongly.

According to him, educating is not conforming. It is learning to doubt, to argue, to resist.

Faced with algorithms that imprison opinions, Freire proposes a pedagogy of cognitive liberation. A political pedagogy... in the noble sense of the word. Freire never hid the fact that his pedagogy was political. But political in the democratic sense: to educate citizens, not executors.

His fundamental question remains relevant today: does a school that does not criticize society serve it... or betray it?

At a time when education is increasingly seen as an “investment,” “competitive-ness,” or “human capital,” Freire reminds us of this uncomfortable truth: school is not a factory. It is—or should be—a place of freedom.

CONCLUSION

Paulo Freire was never a pedagogical guru. He left behind no ready-made methods or educational miracles. He left something better: a framework for thinking about who we teach, what we teach, and what we teach against.

In France and Europe, his thinking is not imposed by decree. It infuses itself.

On the margins, in struggles, in alternative classrooms, in committed training programs. And perhaps that is his greatest victory: to remain indomitable, even after his death.

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PAULO FREIRE'S PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

FROM CRITICISM OF BANKING EDUCATION TO THE PEDAGOGY OF FREEDOM

DOMINIQUE BÉNARD

Paulo Freire starts from a simple but radical observation: traditional education—which he calls “banking”—reproduces the social order and keeps the oppressed in a limited consciousness.

In this model, the teacher transmits knowledge “deposited” in the minds of students, who are mere passive receptacles. The pedagogical relationship is vertical, authoritarian, and based on the idea that the teacher holds legitimate knowledge, while the student must absorb it without questioning it.

This form of education corresponds to a view of human beings as malleable objects, not as historical subjects. It reinforces inequalities by devaluing popular knowledge and imposing the culture of the dominant as the only valid reference. No education is neutral: to ignore relations of domination is already to support the status quo.



Faced with this logic of domestication, Freire proposes a critical and popular education, inserted in a broader project of social transformation. It is not a question of changing society only through school, but of recognizing that, without the transformation of education, there will be no sustainable humanization. This critical education aims to bring about an awareness capable of understanding and acting on the world: it is the process of conscientization.

Awareness arises when a group or individual takes ownership of their own experience, analyzes it critically, and relates it to the social structures that produce it

CRITICAL EDUCATION AS A DRIVER OF AWARENESS

For Freire, raising awareness does not simply mean “becoming aware” in the psychological sense. Awareness is a practice: a movement in which reflection and transformative action feed off each other.

He insists:

“There can be no awareness without the transformative action of men and women on social reality.”

In other words, understanding the world without acting on it is not yet real understanding. Awareness arises when a group or individual takes ownership of their own experience, analyzes it critically, and relates it to the social structures that produce it.

This is where the reversal of pedagogy becomes essential: for a person to recognize themselves as a political subject, they must first be recognized as a subject in the educational process.

THE THREE FORMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS: FROM FATALISM TO CRITICISM

Freire describes the evolution of consciousness in three levels, which are neither automatic nor linear, but are linked to social conditions and educational practices.

1. PRIMARY CONSCIOUSNESS (NAIVE/MAGICAL)

- Focus on immediate needs.

- Magical or fatalistic explanations for problems (“that’s just the way it is”).
- Lack of historical perspective.

The person is submissive to the world.

2. AWAKENED CONSCIOUSNESS (PRE-CRITICAL)

- Simplistic interpretations, nostalgia for the past.
- Weak reasoning, strong emotionality.
- Tendency toward conformity and massification.

The person begins to question himself but remains vulnerable to illusions.

3. CRITICAL/POLITICAL AWARENESS

- In-depth analysis of problems.
- Dialogue, revision of preconceived ideas, intellectual rigor.
- Accountability and rejection of fatalism.

The person becomes capable of acting upon the world rather than suffering it.

The role of education is precisely to accompany this transition: to help each person recognize themselves as a historical subject, capable of understanding the world and transforming it.

Dialogic Education: The Pedagogy of Freedom

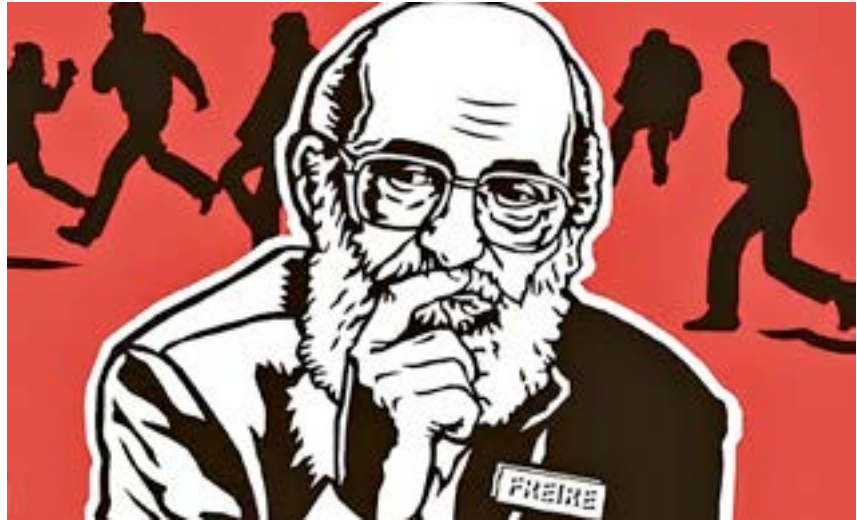
To overcome the banking model and support awareness, Freire proposes a problematizing and dialogical education. For him, dialogue is not a pleasant technique: it is the very way in which knowledge is constructed.

The teacher does not give up teaching, but teaches by learning, and the student learns by teaching. The object of knowledge becomes a mediator between the two. This horizontal relationship allows the “teacher/student” contradiction to be overcome and reveals that everyone participates in the construction of meaning.

The Freirian method of literacy is based on generative words derived from the existential situations of those in training and from collective debates. The language of the people becomes material for critical analysis; students move from the status of objects to that of subjects. This change is at the heart of awareness.

“Liberation is not something that is bestowed upon men and women. It is a practice that requires them to act and reflect on the world to transform it.”

Thus, education becomes a practice of freedom, as it enables the humanization—always incomplete—of individuals and communities. It radicalizes rebellion into a political project and transforms the reading of the world into the power of intervention.



IN BRIEF

- The banking model reproduces oppression.
- Critical and popular education paves the way for historical and political consciousness.
- Awareness is action + reflection, never a simple “inner awakening.”
- The three consciousnesses illuminate this path.
- Dialogical pedagogy makes education a force for liberation.

For him, dialogue is not a pleasant technique: it is the very way in which knowledge is constructed.

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CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DANCE AND PEDAGOGY BY PAULO FREIRE

CECILIA CAVALCANTE VIEIRA



CECILIA CAVALCANTE VIEIRA

Has a master's degree in Dance (UFBA / 2010) and is a member of the Sergipe State Council, where she represents Dance.

A dancer from an early age, she has been a teacher and choreographer of oriental dance since 1999, and a producer and entrepreneur since 2003, when she began leading activities at her own dance studio in Aracaju, Sergipe, Brazil, called Portal Hanna Belly.

The first similarity that comes to mind between Paulo Freire's pedagogy and the practice of teaching dance is that both place the student at the center of the teaching-learning process, as well as their place in the world.

TO BE A PROTAGONIST

Protagonism is having one's own expression. It is the recognition of the power to act and discuss. It is acting in the learning and dance environment. But for this to be well understood, I must also start from the assumption that the dance I am referring to is not the simple imitation of movements and techniques emptied of meaning. This image does not include those models of dance from academic traditions, which aim only to reproduce the steps of the past, without there being many differences between the staging in the present, nor between the dancing cups. Nor do those in which,

in their teaching, there is no contextualization of the moments in which they emerged, of their reason for being and existing in the world, and, due to their emergence, often de-contextualized in teaching and learning spaces, they end up translating into an anti-politics of bodily liberation. The dance I am referring to is one that fosters the dancer's autonomy in creative processes of experimentation and the recognition of their place in the world.

For Paulo Freire, learning is not a mechanical mastery of techniques. It is understanding what is learned and expressing what is understood. Both Dance¹ and Freire recognize that in the act of learning, something new is created, a reinvention of knowledge, an incorporation. They recognize that this is a truly active act, not simply a passive one. *"Incorporation is the result of the search for something that requires effort, recreation, and exploration from those who attempt it. It requires reinvention."*²

1. I differentiate between Dance with a capital letter, referring to the field of knowledge, and dance with a lowercase letter, referring to the action of dancing.

2. FREIRE, Paulo, 2022. *Educação como prática da liberdade*. 52ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, p. 127.

Furthermore, the author states that not only does the student create, but so does the teacher, since the latter needs to appropriate what they teach through critical, non-mechanical, and innovative actions. Contemporary thinking in dance has discussed this issue extensively through the body-media theory, authored by Helena Katz and Christine Greiner, which recognizes the body as a medium of culture and of itself, being the epicenter of a co-evolutionary and transformative process, in which not only the dissemination of information occurs, but also its reorganization³.

This denotes the social nature of the evolution of knowledge and language acquisition. That is why Paulo Freire says that no one learns alone, nor does anyone liberate themselves alone. All cultural transmission and learning always occurs collectively, with the reframing of ideas and information expressed by other people. There is always an inseparable link between the learner and the social body, as well as between the dancer's body and society. The configuration of dance always belongs to a collective, to the result of various possibilities of perception and structuring. Its development is always co-participatory. This observation draws attention to the responsibility to collaborate, to work collectively, for dialogue between subjects who are in transformation, for the "pronunciation of the world,"



even if this pronunciation is carried out through dance steps or the swaying of the body.

A HISTORY INSCRIBED ON HIS BODY

To this end, we must reject the notion of the human being as "abstract, isolated, detached, cut off from the world"⁴, in the words of Paulo Freire. We must reject the notion of the human being as a tabula rasa, as if they were a blank sheet of paper, without hereditary traits or history, on which it is possible to inscribe whatever information we desire. All human beings have their own history inscribed on their bodies, even at the moment of birth or even

The configuration of dance always belongs to a collective, to the result of various possibilities of perception and structuring. Its development is always co-participatory.

3. KATZ, Helena & GREINER, Christine, 2005. Por uma Teoria do Corpomídia in Greiner, C.(org.) O corpo: pistas para estudos indisciplinados. São Paulo: Annablume. pp. 126 - 136.

4. FREIRE, Paulo, 2024. Pedagogia do oprimido. 88ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, p. 98.

... Every student who enters the classroom or dance studio, no matter how "beginner" they may be in that discipline, already knows something, and will articulate what they learn anew with that older knowledge, which the teacher cannot ignore.

before, causing all the information learned to relate to the information already present in them, promoting new adjustments and incorporations. Paulo Freire himself recognizes that people's "total language" consists of "their dances, their music, the use of their bodies, their gestures, their way of walking, of dressing"⁵. This recognizes that every student who enters the classroom or dance studio, no matter how "beginner" they may be in that discipline, already knows something, and will articulate what they learn anew with that older knowledge, which the teacher cannot ignore. Teachers should encourage the expression of this knowledge, as it is through this knowledge that students will relate to the content they are supposed to learn or dance.

"Man exists – existere – in time. He is inside. He is outside. He inherits. He incorporates. He modifies."⁶

Here, too, both in dance and in Freirean pedagogy, the transience of human beings and culture is evident, making change a fundamental element of action in the transformations that human beings effect in the world, including in situations of information transmission, whether they be moments

of learning or cultural manifestations.

THE BODY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

This change occurs in the relationship between the body and the environment (which should be understood not only as places, but also personal and social relationships), which is continuous. Therefore, with each new moment, new guidelines arise, and the educator and the student must adapt to them. Similarly, with each new moment, the body changes, proposing new and different movements. For dance, this exchange between the body and the environment is fundamentally important, because it is because of this coming and going that artistic innovation will occur. It is in this dialogue that simple imitation of movement is transformed into dance, when there is in fact something new produced by reorganization due to incorporation⁷. If Freire claims to only understand an education that expands human beings' awareness of their transitivity, the art of changing movement is an excellent strategy for this.

In this regard, the behavior of students, including dance students, should not be prescribed from above, but

5. FREIRE, Paulo, 2021. *Ação cultural para a liberdade e outros escritos*. 16ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, p. 92.

6. FREIRE, Paulo, 2022. *Educação como prática de liberdade*. 52ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, p. 57

7. KATZ, Helenna., & GREINER, Christine, 2001. *A natureza cultural do corpo*. *Lições de dança*, 3, pp. 77-102.



Photo from the author's personal collection showing a community belly dancing workshop in 2018 at the Creativity Center in Aracaju, Sergipe, Brazil, whose goal was to explore female physicality.

based on their own situational guidelines. He rejects dependence and passivity in schools by presenting learning in a purely abstract way, disconnected from any practical use and decontextualized from the realities of students. Educators should encourage positive actions that take into account circumstances and people, highlighting the asymmetrical situations they experience in each context. They should encourage students to negotiate with the world in which they live, making them competent and active participants in the activities of that world. As co-creators in training, students should exercise their critical faculties, using their own culture as a starting point.

All of this implies creating a learning environment in which the specific content of the subjects is never more valuable than the creation of attitudes favorable to criticism and thinking for oneself. He proposes the culture circle as a replacement for the traditional, structurally authoritarian school, an environment in which learners, while learning a new linguistic code, unveil their own socio-historical reality. Who hears this and cannot imagine a dance hall?

BREAKING WITH THE SOCIAL HIERARCHY BETWEEN THE INTELLECT AND THE BODY

In this sense, Paulo Freire does not discriminate against physical labor, recognizing its importance beyond

... Dance, on the other hand, has always been linked to the popular, to what is done with the body, often “unruly,” “uncivilized,” and for which it is necessary to establish norms

a task disconnected from knowledge. He recognizes the need for workers in physical and manual trades to know the fundamentals of their work, how it should be done, why it should be done, what it is necessary for, and what innovations are possible for the future, recognizing that there is inherent and complex knowledge in practical tasks, and that even they are never purely mechanical⁸. Thus, he also does not diminish or hierarchize what is done with the body, breaking with the social hierarchy between intellectual (sedentary) and manual labor. Thus, dance also recognizes that there is knowledge in dance, through all the transits of information in the body and reflective actions on behaviors and movements. Dance itself is a physical process of thought⁹. Neither dance nor Freirean pedagogy distinguishes between working with the body for its own recognition in the world, without recognizing a hierarchy of knowledge between intellectual and physical activity, for example, since both will always be superimposed, intertwined, and cannot exist separately. For neither of them is there a rupture between theory and practice.

POPULAR CULTURE

He also does not discriminate against popular culture. He clearly proposes that edu-

cators immerse themselves in it, lest they not be heard or understood by their students. He also proposes the articulation between popular and scientific knowledge, reducing the distance between the university and the population, and hopefully believes that in the future these two forms of knowledge will stand side by side in social and academic recognition. Dance, on the other hand, has always been linked to the popular, to what is done with the body, often “unruly,” “uncivilized,” and for which it is necessary to establish norms. It is in popular culture that the body appears and has a voice, since in enlightened scholarly, religious, and intellectual circles, the dissociation between mind and body, assuming the former to be superior to the latter, has relegated all bodily aspects to the realm of the instinctive, barbaric, and animalistic, to something that must be hidden, denied, and subjugated. However, in popular culture, the body thrives in the knowledge of ancestral medicine, as well as in festivals, dances, drumming, capoeira, the hustle and bustle of markets, celebrations of holy days, etc.

For dance—an activity in which one truly learns by doing—the practice of “banking education,” a concept developed by Freire, in which the student is me-

8. FREIRE, Paulo, 2025. *Pedagogia da esperança: um reencontro com a pedagogia do oprimido*. 36ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.

9. KATZ, Helena, 2003. *A Dança, Pensamento do Corpo* in *O homem máquina: a ciência manipula o corpo*. Novaes, A. (org.). São Paulo, Companhia das Letras. pp. 261 - 274.



rely a quantitative repository of the knowledge presented by the teacher, is completely useless, since this form of teaching does not involve creation, something fundamental to artistic work and even to cultural transmission¹⁰. Dance teachers who choose this repetitive, memorization-based, and monotonous approach generally perpetuate in their students a repertoire of purely imitative movements, empty of meaning, and are busy creating choreographies for performances, with steps proposed arbitrarily without the participation of the dancers, in prescribed communications, usually with the justification of creating artistic work, which presents very little innovation. Unfortunately, this path is in reality a form of “training,” in which oppressive systems of command are perpetuated under the camouflage of the veneer of beauty of art.

SAY OR REPEAT

Paulo Freire differentiates between saying a word and repeating a word. Dance similarly differentiates between the act of making-saying with movement and repeating the step¹¹. In dance, from the perspective of Freirean pedagogy, there is no distinction or rupture between choreographer and dancer; there is always interpreter-creator and co-creation. Dance, from Freire's perspective, can play a role even in the creation of choreography and the artistic scene, and not only in the teaching-learning relationship. With it, a whole “beauty” is created, a word coined by Freire, which implies a political dimension of aesthetics, and in which there is an inherent way of saying. With it comes the path to the development of the conscious body.

For Paulo Freire, liberation from the pedagogy of the

Paulo Freire differentiates between saying a word and repeating a word. Dance similarly differentiates between the act of making-saying with movement and repeating the step.

10. FREIRE, Paulo, 2024. *Pedagogia do oprimido*. 88ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.

11. SETENTA, Jussara, 2008. *O fazer-dizer do corpo: dança e performatividade*. Salvador, EDUFBA.



Furthermore, dialogical pedagogy, like the arts and dance, promotes the exercise of citizenship and democracy.

oppressed and banking education, in which there is authoritarianism and submission, is achieved through a contextualizing pedagogy, which locates the person in their place in the world, and a problematizing pedagogy, which presents the person with their situation as a problem, synthesized in a dialogical pedagogy, in which there is continuous dialogue between the parties involved in the learning process.

Furthermore, dialogical pedagogy, like the arts and dance, promotes the exercise of citizenship and democracy. Dialogue fundamentally implies respect between the people engaged in it. Similarly, art students learn to put themselves in the other's place—dance students learn literally to put themselves in

the other's place, and not just metaphorically—a skill that is fundamental to successful democracy, fundamental to the exercise of respect for others, even if they do not agree with their ideas, demonstrating the tolerance so strongly defended and practiced by Paulo Freire. The arts exercise empathy, which is positional reasoning. After all, citizens need to learn to identify with the fate of others, which can only be done through imagination. Only with imagination is it possible to see the world through the eyes of others, to feel their suffering vividly. Only with imagination do other people become real and equal. Only with imagination can empathy be developed, which is so necessary for the process of humanization, skillfully defended by Freire.

For him, citizens in a democracy are restless, critical, and have greater flexibility of conscience. A subservient attitude, which is harmful to life, is fatal to democracy, since democracy cannot fully exist without alert and active citizens. In his most widely read book, Freire addressed the dichotomy between oppressors and oppressed¹². After all, every society has people who are more willing to interact with others in terms of reciprocity and mutual respect, as well as others who seek the comfort of domination.

PHYSICAL RIGIDITY, A CLOSE RELATIVE OF SUBMISSION

What is necessary for contemporary and democratic society is to understand how to produce more citizens with the former characteristics and fewer with the latter. I believe that the arts and dance are a fully viable path to this, as they are practices that destabilize authoritarian systems of power and bring possibilities for reinterpreting the world. For people in situations of oppression, art is sometimes the only possible discourse, and artists are never simply victims of circumstances.

Unfortunately, we currently observe that the active learning proposed by Paulo Freire, as well as the investigation of the world through the arts, has been rejected in favor of a content-based pedagogy geared toward stan-

dardized multiple-choice exams that serve modern paradigms of productivity.

Although the author did not expressly mention a pedagogy using the arts and dance as a method, he conveys an epistemology that is totally open and receptive to them, in the same way that he contributes substantially to arts education as content.

After all, the dance artist, aware of their incompleteness and impermanence, committed to their historical otherness, in a relational corporeality that reinvents itself with each movement, promotes archaeological investigation of their own body in their intentionality to “be more.”

After all, in order to explore the unknown and transform one's own world, it is fundamentally necessary to let go of bodily rigidity, the first cousin of submission and authoritarianism, as well as the shame of taking one's place on the stage.

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After all, in order to explore the unknown and transform one's own world, it is fundamentally necessary to let go of bodily rigidity, the first cousin of submission and authoritarianism...

12. FREIRE, Paulo, 2024. *Pedagogia do oprimido*. 88ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.

AN EDITORIAL ADVENTURE

TIERRA NUEVA

EDITING PAULO FREIRE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PROTESTANTISM IN THE RIVER PLATE REGION

DR. FEDERICO BRUGALETTA



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The purpose of these notes is to analyze the relationships between politics, religion, and publishing in the Spanish-language circulation of Paulo Freire's work, paying particular attention to the publishing initiatives associated with Liberation Christianity that published the Brazilian educator's books in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The publishers ICIRA (Chile), APE (Colombia), and Tierra Nueva (Uruguay and Argentina) became important local epicenters for the circulation of Paulo Freire's pedagogy at the confluence of religion, politics, and the Spanish-language book market. Santiago de Chile, Bogotá, and the River Plate stood out on a map where left-wing Christians published, disseminated, and read the Brazilian educator's books in order to revolutionize the education and society of their time.

THE TERRA NUEVA PUBLISHING HOUSE

Focusing on the publishing house Tierra Nueva, it is worth noting that it was founded in late 1969 in Montevideo, within the framework of the Church and Society in Latin America (ISAL), a Protestant political and religious group that, since the beginning of that decade, had been committed to combining Christian faith with political action. ISAL belonged to a transnational network of Protestant churches based in Geneva (Switzerland), gathered around the World Council of Churches (WCC)¹. The WCC was an ecumenical institution created in 1948 with a marked concern for the "rapid social changes" that were taking place in the "third world."² ISAL members started from the diagnosis that Latin American society was facing a "revolutionary moment" to which Christians should

1. For a study on the Tierra Nueva publishing house, see: F. Brugaletta, *Tierra Nueva (1969-1985). Left-wing Protestantism, publishing and education in the recent history of Latin America* (Master's thesis in History and Memory - UNLP), 2019.

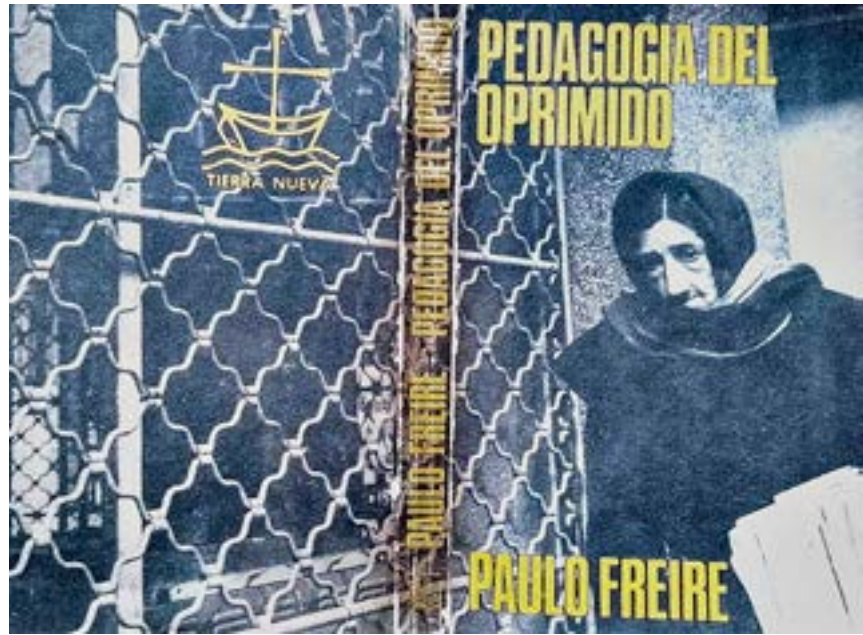
2. H. Conteris, "La Iglesia en revolución," in *Cristianismo y Sociedad*, 1964, p. 1.

adhere as an expression of their social responsibility³.

A NETWORK OF ECUMENICAL LINKS

The publishing house was thus part of a network of ecumenical ties that were woven between Montevideo and Geneva, but which defined a larger space that encompassed all of Latin America. Its main distribution circuit consisted of a network of Protestant bookstores with a continental reach that had been consolidated since the beginning of the decade⁴. This network was used to distribute ISAL's main publication, the magazine *Cristianismo y Sociedad*, throughout the continent, as well as the publishing house itself⁵.

Julio Barreiro (1922–2005) was the main driving force and leader of the publishing house since his position as secretary of publications at ISAL. A member of the Methodist Church of Montevideo, Barreiro studied law at the University



Cover of the first Spanish edition of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, printed in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1970. Edited by Marcela Gajardo and José Luis Fiori. Translated by Jorge Mellado. ICIRA, 1969.

of the Republic and taught there in the subjects of History of Ideas and Political Science. From a young age, he led publishing initiatives within Protestantism, such as the newspaper *La Idea* and the magazine for evangelical children *Arco Iris*⁶. However, the Tierra Nueva publishing house project was innovative in relation to previous initiatives, as it sought to transcend the confessional sphere and compete in the secular book

The publishing house was thus part of a network of ecumenical ties that were woven between Montevideo and Geneva...

3. See: P. Abrecht, *Las iglesias y los rápidos cambios sociales*, 1963; E. De Vries, *El hombre en los rápidos cambios sociales*, 1962.

4. Among other points in the confessional distribution network, the following can be mentioned: "La Aurora" bookstore in Argentina and Uruguay; Impresa Metodista and Livraria Internacional in São Paulo (Brazil); Livraria La Reforma in Puerto Rico, Livraria Luz y Verdad in Lima; Livraria El Sembrador and El Lucero in Santiago, Chile; Livraria Odell in Matanzas (Cuba); Casa Unida de Publicaciones (CUPSA) in Mexico City, Livraria Dominica in the Dominican Republic, Livraria Senderos in Venezuela. In addition, there are also direct sales through ISAL representatives: Gerardo Pet in Bolivia, Reverend Jaime Goff in Colombia and Alvaro Ramos in Bogotá, Waldo César in Brazil, Reverend Marcelo Pérez Rivas in San José, Costa Rica, Miguel Calvetti and Rev. Gonzalo Carvajal in Ecuador, Benjamín Monterroso in Guatemala, and Reverend Simón Alvaralo in Panama.

5. F. Brugaletta, "Cristianismo y Sociedad (1963-1973). Protestantismo de izquierda en la historia reciente de América Latina" (Christianity and Society (1963-1973). Left-wing Protestantism in the recent history of Latin America), in *Catedral Tomada*, 2018.

6. F. Brugaletta, "Julio Barreiro: intellectual trajectory of Paulo Freire's Protestant publisher," in *Políticas da Memória*, 2022.



The titles associated with Paulo Freire's pedagogy occupied a prominent place in the Tierra Nueva catalog and constituted the publisher's greatest commercial success in its entire history.

market. In this sense, the publishing house focused on the intersection of two worlds, offering evangelical readers books that reflected the new revolutionary era and, at the same time, offering progressive readers books on Christianity from a revolutionary perspective.

The history of the publishing house can be divided into two stages: the first, between 1969 and 1973, which took place in Montevideo; and the second, between 1974 and 1985, which took place in Buenos Aires. During this time, Tierra Nueva published more than 70 original titles and created eight collections. In 1974, Julio Barreiro went into exile in Buenos Aires after being removed from his job at the university, persecuted, and imprisoned by the Uruguayan dictatorship, which lasted from 1973 to 1985. He thus continued his publishing venture in the Argentine capital, and despite the Argentine dictatorship that developed between 1976 and 1983, Barreiro managed to remain in Argentina—not without difficulty—thanks to his editorial work and the financial and political support of the WCC and its humanitarian aid agencies, such as UNHCR.

WRITINGS BY PAULO FREIRE

The titles associated with Paulo Freire's pedagogy occupied a prominent place in the Tierra Nueva catalog and

constituted the publisher's greatest commercial success in its entire history. Julio Barreiro was proud to have obtained the exclusive rights to publish the Brazilian educator's texts in Spanish. In fact, the publisher's first three titles were associated with Freire's pedagogy: *Consciencia y Revolución* (Consciousness and Revolution) (1969), *Se vive como se puede* (If You Live as You Can) (1969), and *La educación como práctica de la libertad* (Education as the Practice of Freedom) (1969). The first was a compilation of essays on Paulo Freire's pedagogy organized by ISAL, while the second reported on the pilot experience of a "culture circle" developed by these Protestants in a working-class neighborhood of Montevideo.

In turn, *Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1969) was the first title written exclusively by Freire to be published in Montevideo, first published in Spanish in the same year by ICIRA in Santiago, Chile. Two more of the author's titles were published in that city: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *Extension or Communication? Conscientization in Rural Areas* (1973). During the second phase of the publishing house in Buenos Aires, which began in 1974, three titles associated with Paulo Freire were published. The first was part of the magazine *Fichas Latinoamericanas*, under the title "Paulo Freire in Latin America," which, among other topics

of interest, included unpublished texts by the Brazilian educator on black theology, reflecting the ties he had forged during his time in the United States in 1969. Secondly, the title *Education for Social Change* (1974), which he shared with two other educators of the time, Pierre Furter and Iván Illich. Finally, the book *Cultural Action for Freedom* (1975), which was the last book that Terra Nueva managed to publish in Buenos Aires. While *Letters to Guinea-Bissau. Notes from an ongoing pedagogical experiment* (1977) was Paulo Freire's last book edited by Julio Barreiro, due to difficulties associated with ideological control by the Argentine dictatorship, it had to be published in Mexico under the imprint of the publishing house Siglo XXI.

The connection between Freire and Barreiro began to form in 1967. That year, the Montevideo publisher began exchanging correspondence with the Brazilian educator with the aim of organizing a training meeting in Santiago, Chile. As a result of this

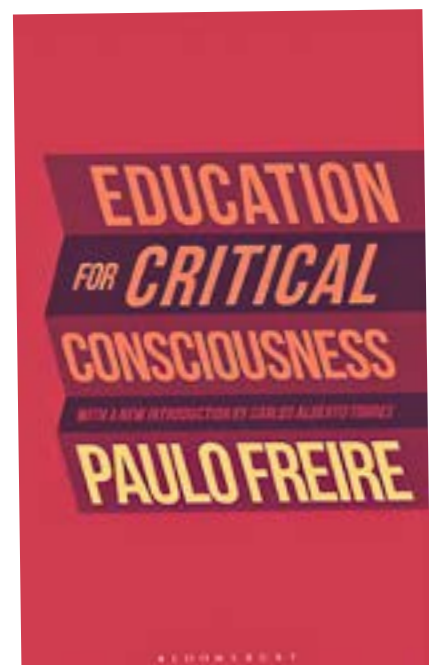
initial exchange, in May 1968, a “training seminar for awareness” was organized jointly by ISAL, the Christian Student Movement (MEC), and ICIRA. As part of the training, Uruguayan Protestants from ISAL presented the Brazilian educator with a “pilot project” for “applying the Freire method” in a neighborhood of Montevideo⁷.

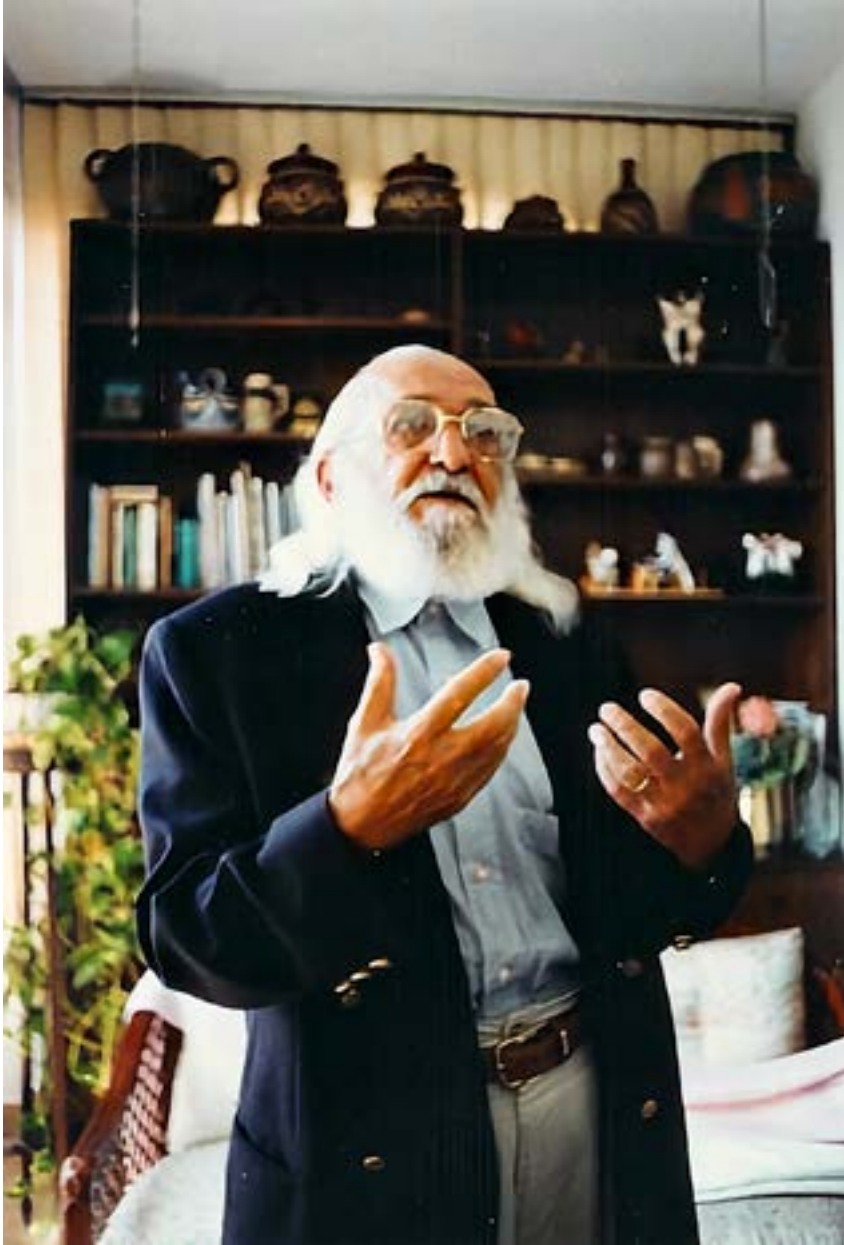
In September 1968, under the title “Contribution to the process of consciousness-raising in Latin America,” Julio Barreiro edited a special supplement to the magazine *Cristianismo y Sociedad*, a series of texts they had worked on together in Santiago, Chile⁸. The texts were presented as materials “indispensable for all those who wish to apply Prof. Paulo Freire's method in the process of raising awareness among the Latin American people.”⁹ The “explanatory note” explained the meaning that ISAL Protestants gave to Paulo Freire's pedagogy, not only as a method of adult literacy, but as an instrument associated with aspirations for political and social transformation.

7. F. Brugaletta, “Se vive como se puede. Círculo de cultura e literatura popular nos usos protestantes do método de Paulo Freire no Uruguai de 68” (Live as you can. Circle of culture and popular literature in the Protestant uses of Paulo Freire's method in Uruguay in 1968), in Southwell, M. (Comp.) *Fazer história da educação: enfoques, objetos, problemas* (pp. 391-419). La Plata: FAHCE-UNLP, 2024.

8. The supplement's index consists of the following texts: “Adult literacy,” “The ‘banking’ concept of education and dehumanization. The problematizing conception of education and humanization,” “Research and methodology of research on the ‘generating’ theme,” “On the generating theme and the thematic universe,” “Bibliographic reference: critical considerations on the act of studying,” written by Paulo Freire; “Suggestions for applying the method in the field,” written jointly by Paulo Freire and Raúl Velozo Fariás; “Dialectics and freedom: two dimensions of thematic research,” by José Luis Fiori, and “Learning to speak your mind: Professor Paulo Freire's literacy method,” by Ernani María Fiori. Many of these texts were rewritten by Freire for the publication of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, as well as used by TN as a prologue in this same book, as in the case of the text by Prof. Ernani María Fiori.

9. ISAL, in *Cristianismo y Sociedad*, special supplement, 1968.





Paulo Freire. Photo Leandro Melito / Portail EBC

Furthermore, it was emphasized that this was a “non-commercial” edition, carefully presented as material reserved for ISAL’s “internal use.” Thus, it can be said that this special edition of *Cristianismo y Sociedad* magazine was the first publication of Paulo Freire’s texts in Montevideo and that it was distributed through the extensive network of

Protestant bookstores and publishers associated with ISAL throughout Latin America. The success of the first edition of “Se vive como se puede” by the Arca publishing house in Montevideo, added to the contact initiated in Chile with Freire, suggests that Julio Barreiro recognized the possibility of starting the Tierra Nueva company with this type of title, which would allow him to transcend the Protestant readership community.

A REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPT IN LITERACY

A year later, in issue No. 21 of the magazine *Cristianismo y Sociedad*, an advertisement appeared for the first time from the publisher Tierra Nueva offering Paulo Freire’s book *Education as the Practice of Freedom*, which had been released in November 1969. The title in question is presented as the “revolutionary concept of literacy,” as “a different and totally current book.”¹⁰ According to the advertisement, the “Paulo Freire method” sought to provoke in the illiterate “a development of their political consciousness with a view to their participation in the process of national liberation.”

The books published by Tierra Nueva in Montevideo were printed at *Comunidade do Sul*, a printing house run by anar-

10. Advertisement by TN, in the magazine *Cristianismo y Sociedad*, no. 21, 1969.

chists who printed “cooperatively,” most likely using a linotype machine at the time. It is also important to note that distribution logistics at the publisher's offices in Montevideo were handled in a very artisanal manner. According to the testimonies of Julio Barreiro's sons, they were responsible for serving the public at the bookstore located next to the Central Methodist Church in the city center. At the same time, they were responsible for receiving orders from abroad, assembling book packages, which were then loaded and shipped by air-mail¹¹.

It is worth highlighting the edition of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in 1970 in two hemispheres simultaneously, thanks to the transnational Protestant network. On the one hand, the first edition in Spanish—and the first worldwide edition—was published by Tierra Nueva in Montevideo. On the other hand, an English version was published by Herder & Herder in New York¹². This statement is corroborated by one of the few letters that have been preserved from the correspondence between Julio

Barreiro and Paulo Freire. Dated February 24, 1970, it was written in Geneva. Freire had arrived from the United States, where he spent a season at Harvard during 1969.¹³ From 1970 until his definitive return from exile to Brazil in 1979, Paulo Freire worked at the WCC headquarters in Geneva, where he coordinated several educational programs developed mainly in Africa. In this way, Freire's connection with the ISAL Protestants, which began in 1967, acquired a point of formal institutionalization as specialized WCC staff.

AN IMMEDIATE SUCCESS

Freire's publications in Tierra Nueva were an instant success. In less than three years, between 1969 and 1971, more than 30,000 copies of Freire's books were sold from Montevideo. The demand for Paulo Freire's titles was so high that Julio Barreiro faced serious difficulties in supplying the Rio de la Plata market. Upon learning that there were “pirated” editions of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in Buenos Aires, Barreiro established a strategic alliance with Arnaldo Orfila Reynal, the great left-wing



Freire's publications in Tierra Nueva were an instant success. In less than three years, between 1969 and 1971, more than 30,000 copies of Freire's books were sold from Montevideo.

11. Interview conducted by the author with Eduardo and Álvaro Barreiro, Montevideo, on July 23, 2015.

12. Publishing house founded by Bartolomeus Herder in Freiburg, Germany, in 1801; from the outset, the catalog combined works on Christian theology and pedagogy. In 1957, the publishing house opened a branch in New York under the direction of Werner Mark Linz (1935-2013), who served as director of Herder & Herder and Seabury Press (the Episcopal Church's publishing house) and as president of the Continuum publishing group between 1979 and 1999, both in London and New York.

13. Letter consulted in Julio Barreiro's Personal Archive in Solymar (Montevideo, Uruguay).



Paulo Freire teaching angels to read. Source : (Re)lecture n° 12, printemps 2006

mination of the work. This disassociation marked the end of a cycle of personal and institutional mediations of left-wing Protestantism that had been crucial for the initial circulation of Freirean thought in the Spanish language. With Barreiro's departure and the direct concentration of rights in the hands of Siglo XXI, the Mexican publisher consolidated its role as the main disseminator of Freire's work in the Ibero-American sphere, which continues to this day.

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publisher in recent Latin American history¹⁴.

The agreement established between Arnaldo Orfila and Julio Barreiro in 1971 allowed the publisher Siglo XXI to publish, from Mexico, Buenos Aires, and Madrid, the most important titles of Freirean thought. From 1985 onwards, Tierra Nueva ceased to function effectively, when Barreiro managed to regain his university positions in Montevideo after the restoration of democracy in Uruguay. The publisher then concentrated on managing the copyright of the Brazilian educator's work as a kind of "publishing agent." In 1988, the publisher Siglo XXI formalized direct contracts with Freire, dispensing with Barreiro's mediation to reduce costs and facilitate the disse-

14. On the connection between Tierra Nueva and Siglo XXI regarding the Freire edition, see: F. Brugaletta, *Editar a Paulo Freire desde Buenos Aires y México. An approach to the epistolary contacts between Tierra Nueva and Siglo XXI (1971-1977)*, in *Ejes de Economía y Sociedad*, 7(13), 446-468, 2023.

"And teach them to read too!"

DR. EDUARDO MISSONI

My arrival in Nicaragua to work as a volunteer doctor in the country's rural areas coincided with the launch of the "National Literacy Crusade." Schools would close for six months, and more than 95,000 young high school students and their teachers would be deployed throughout the country, from marginal neighborhoods to the most remote rural villages, in order to teach reading and writing to 50% of the country's population, which at the time was illiterate. Six months later, the People's Literacy Army celebrated its triumph, with a reduction in the illiteracy rate to less than 13%. For many of these young people, mostly from the capital and large urban centers, this was also the first time they had come into contact with the poorest and most disadvantaged realities of the country.

A PROCESS OF AWARENESS-RAISING

In this sense, the Crusade was above all a process of raising awareness; by seeing with their own eyes and sharing the difficult living conditions of the peasants, young people were able to understand the reason for the Revolution¹.

Literacy was one of the first tasks of the Sandinista revolution, which, just a year earlier, had defeated the bloody Somoza dictatorship that had oppressed the country for decades. Among the antecedents of the literacy campaign, we can cite the literacy efforts of General Augusto C. Sandino and the inspiring thought of Commander Carlos Fonseca Amador who, in the early days of the insurrection, when his comrades were training the peasants in the mountains, told them: "And teach them to read too!".



1. See also: Nicaragua triumphs in literacy. Document and Testimonies of the National Literacy Crusade. Ministry of Education. Republic of Nicaragua - Ecumenical Department of Research, San José, Costa Rica, 1981.



Literacy campaign in Nicaragua in the 1980s

EDUARDO MISSONI

Doctor, specialist in tropical medicine, professor of global health, development, and management of international organizations at several universities and research institutes in Italy and abroad. He was responsible for the Italian Development Cooperation's social and health cooperation programs in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, and represented Italy, on a technical level, at the WHO and in other international contexts. Previously, he worked as a UNICEF official in Mexico and as a volunteer doctor in international cooperation in Nicaragua. From 2004 to 2007, he was Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM).

A DEMOCRATIC AND LIBERATING EDUCATION

The peasantry was the sector most affected by illiteracy. Long before the victory, groups of educators integrated into the revolutionary process reflected on what a truly liberating and democratic education would be in a free Nicaragua. They were aware that, upon the ruins of Somoza's regime, it was necessary to build the foundations and structures of an education diametrically opposed to the alienating and submissive education of that period, oriented towards consumption and imposed by foreign specialists on national teachers and students, according to a capitalist scheme fertile in individualism and absence of solidarity.

A "banking" education – to use Paulo Freire's terms – not only in pedagogical terms, but also because it conformed to the needs of the international economy and

finance. For the Sandinistas, the cultural revolution could not be dissociated from the political revolution; for them, literacy meant teaching, sensitizing, politicizing, and humanizing.

PAULO FREIRE'S METHOD

From a pedagogical point of view, the Crusade adopted Paulo Freire's method. During one of his many visits to Nicaragua, he declared: *"This revolution is a small, beautiful, pure and charming girl, and we need to support her."* Convinced of the possibility of success, he affirmed: *"With what you are doing and with this method, you will learn to read in five months, you will succeed"*². The cohabitation between students and peasants put into practice Paulo Freire's vision of an education in which no one knows everything, and no one ignores everything, but where everyone learns together, influenced by reality.

THE LITERACY GUERRILLAS

The young *"brigadistas, literacy guerrillas"* were trained in the months leading up to the start of the Crusade, thanks to a cascading multiplier system. First, 80 trainers were prepared in a 15-day workshop, which also allowed for verification of the effectiveness of their training in the field. Then, a second similar team was formed, followed by approximately 12,000 teachers, who in turn

2. Manuel Lucero, March 23, 1980: Literacy to Liberate. *Diário Barricada*, March 23, 2023 <https://diariobarricada.com/2023/03/23/23-de-marzo-de-1980-alfabetizar-para-liberar/>

were tasked with training the thousands of brigadistas who, *"Puño en alto! Libro abierto!"* (Fist raised! Book open!), as the crusade's hymn recited, prepared to *"transform darkness into light,"* equipped with a literacy notebook-book for daily use and a manual containing methodological explanations, pedagogical, organizational, and political guidelines.



Literacy for farmers in Nicaragua

POLITICAL LITERACY

"We are not claiming that we are offering an apolitical form of literacy," emphasized Sergio Ramírez Mercado, then a member of the National Reconstruction Council. *"It is time for us in Nicaragua to lose our fear of the term 'political,' because this is political literacy."*³

This literacy program, Ramírez stressed, aimed to awaken in the peasants and the most disadvantaged classes of Nicaragua the sociopolitical motivations that would allow them to integrate into the revolutionary process from a productive, cultural, and social perspective.

The guidelines for literacy instructors stated: *"We must make it clear that we are about to face a new challenge. Literacy work will take place in a family home, a church, a bandstand, a hallway—anywhere. We should not consider ourselves omniscient teachers; those who learn to read and write will not be*

ignorant individuals who come to learn. We will be the driving force behind the teaching and learning process. The people we are teaching are people who think, who create, who express their ideas, who possess knowledge. In this epic journey, we will all learn."

The literacy textbooks were not conceived as rigid tools that left no room for creativity, but rather to encourage discussion, alternative approaches, and proposals.

THE PROGRAM AND THE METHOD

The program was based on 23 themes related to the revolutionary process, ranging from the ideas and proposals of the Revolution's heroes to projects of social transformation, housing, health, education, and even international politics. For each theme, a photograph that visually expressed certain fundamental elements was used to create what Paulo Freire's

We are not claiming that we are offering an apolitical form of literacy," emphasized Sergio Ramírez Mercado, then a member of the National Reconstruction Council.

3. Sergio Ramírez Mercado, Entrevistas y opiniones. Encuentro. Revista Universidad Centroamericana, 16, 1980, pp. 64-65.



In Terrabona, the village where I practiced medicine, the victory over illiteracy was also celebrated on August 23, 1980, as I recount in my book "Misa Campesina"...

method calls a "psychosocial stage." When presenting the image to the group of learners, the instructor encouraged a dialogue around the theme suggested by the image, allowing the group to express their interpretation of reality and reflect on their liberation process.

After this initial analytical, political, oral, and psychosocial stage, a second stage, of synthesis, was carried out. During this second stage, a sentence was extracted, condensing some of the fundamental elements of the theme and, at the same time, providing the necessary elements for learning to read and write. For example, the words "The Revolution" contain the five vowels that would be used in the first lesson. Finally, using the letters and syllables learned, the literacy group constructed new elements according to their own creativity⁴.

TERRABONA: A TERRITORY FREE FROM ILLITERACY

In Terrabona, the village where I practiced medicine, the victory over illiteracy was also celebrated on August 23, 1980, as I recount in my book "Misa Campesina":

The bean harvest was going well. The small plants, pulled from the ground with all their roots and gathered in the center of the field, dried in the sun. Now, the farmers beat the small mounds with sticks, collecting the beans that had sprung from the pods onto a cloth. These beans constituted the staple food of the local population and a few Italian volunteers.

The literacy "crusade" had also yielded good results, and the students, after six months spent in the mountains as teachers, were returning to the city. A large closing party had been organized in Terrabona. Once again, the literacy brigades marched through the city streets, each preceded by a large banner or sign bearing the name of the community where they had worked. The brigade members entered the village singing and shouting slogans, their gray cotton uniforms completely faded. For many of the city students, literacy had been the first opportunity to discover another, very different part of their country—a world that some preferred to know only through folkloric images. Many wealthy families had not allowed their children to participate in this national mobilization.

4. El Método, Encuentro Revista Universidad Centroamericana, 16, 1980, p. 26.

"Fist raised, book open!" The cry echoed throughout the village.

The church square of Father Jorge's church once again became the stage for the political and cultural event, with speeches from local crusade leaders accompanied by simple theatrical performances. Even Toño, the coordinator of the Terrabona Council, took the floor and used the opportunity to announce the appointment of Salomé, my friend from El Rincón, as a council member representing the rural area. The music continued late into the night.

"Terrabona: a territory free of illiteracy!" Perhaps not entirely. These percentages, which at the national level represented an extraordinary and improbable 12% of the illiterate population, were sometimes not entirely reliable. Many brigade members were strongly tempted to present better results than those actually achieved in their literacy work. In a competition of pride, but without prizes to win, they sometimes turned a blind eye when evaluating the results of their students' final exams. The truth is that I had to continue prescribing solutions with appropriate diagrams.

But it was also true that these 80,000 young people, exiled for five months in the mountains with the peasants, represented a tangible sign of the desire for change.

Unfortunately, even the Literacy Crusade had its martyrs. The assassination of Georgino An-

drade, the first literacy teacher killed by the Contras, showed that some did not appreciate the change. The former Somoza National Guard was reorganizing into armed gangs, which very quickly found their main support in the new president of the United States, Ronald Reagan. Some peasant families who had taken these young people into their homes throughout this period wanted to accompany them to Terrabona; on the occasion of the farewell, the emotion was very strong. The brigadistas left behind in those mountains relatives, adopted sisters and brothers⁵.

A GREAT LIFE LESSON.

The National Crusade for Literacy and the Nicaraguan revolutionary process were also great life lessons for me. Even today, when I enter the classroom as a teacher, I invite my students to be my teachers as well, so that together we can critically analyze reality, learn together, and seek together the path to building a better world.

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Even today, when I enter the classroom as a teacher, I invite my students to be my teachers as well, so that together we can critically analyze reality, learn together, and seek together the path to building a better world.

5. Eduardo Missoni, *Misa Campesina. Un médico italiano en la Nicaragua revolucionaria*. Bubok publishing, 2011

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR BERNARD CHARLOT

A COLLECTIVE HUG



Professor Bernard Charlot was one of those people who seemed to have lived two or more lives in a single existence, due to the grandeur and beauty of his own life. He was born in France on September 15, 1944, a year in which Europe was still struggling against the horrors of World War II.

From a humble family, he was always a dedicated and present boy in French schools, which bequeathed to us the identity of modern public education, and he fought hard to get to university. To support himself and his family, he worked as a laborer and as a waiter, while reading every book he could get his hands on, with the eagerness of someone who knows that life demands a lot from all of us. He was at the Sorbonne when the student riot of May 1968 took to the streets. He became a teacher and went to work in Tunisia. He traveled almost the entire United States by bus, just to learn a little more about the country he read about in books. And, with

this experience, in 1976, he wrote a book that marked modern pedagogy: *The Pedagogical Mystification*. This work transcended France and arrived in Brazil in 1979, through Zahar Editores. Currently, it is considered a landmark for broadening the debate and helping to demystify education, which reflects diverse social realities and opposing ideologies.

For many years, he was a professor at the University of Paris VIII. In the 1990s, he helped organize the 1st World Education Forum in Porto Alegre, southern Brazil. Also during this period, he participated as a guest in an International Seminar organized by the Municipal Education Secretariat in Porto Alegre, becoming a reference in curricular debates on the Citizen School. Among other works, he published "On the Relationship with Knowledge: Elements for a Theory" (1997/2000 - France/Brazil), "From the Relationship with Knowledge to Educational Practices" (Brazil, 2018), which discuss how students

relate to knowledge; and "Education or Barbarism?: A Choice for Contemporary Society" (2020 - France/Brazil), which addresses the absence, in contemporary pedagogy, of an anthropological proposal, as it has become strictly a space where students study to secure jobs to improve their countries' economy.

Having lived in Brazil since 2003, Bernard Charlot started a Brazilian family and was a visiting professor at the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS) for several years. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to his wife and children, while closely following educational developments around the world. At UFS, he helped found postgraduate programs, created the Educon Colloquium, and trained countless students. "Young Bernard," as some friends called him, had an extremely significant role in UniProsa – a space dedicated to good prose and democratic publications in support of education. His life, at its core, was marked by intellectual prose, a critical and refined sense of humor, an incredible ability to organize and lead debates and productions, loving-kindness, and a great will to live! In the hospital, in the days leading up to his passing, he asked his wife and children to read to him the articles that were being prepared for this edition of *Approches Coopératives*. He had helped gather the authors to this publication.

Friendship is a long and intense period of maturation, as Aristotle taught us. We have lost a friend, a great and wise thinker! A man, an intellectual, and a citizen committed to public education and democracy! A researcher of the highest tradition who leaves behind an immense legacy of produced knowledge. May we continue with his questioning and always proactive presence.

This embrace is signed by Ana Lúcia Souza de Freitas, Dominique Bénard, Celso dos S. Vasconcellos, Cesar Nunes, Maria Amélia Santoro Franco & Matheus Batalha.

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WILL HE LOVE ME, GYPSY?

HELENA VALMONT



And that's how her magic works
She shows and gives a piece of her affection
Because the rest is only for those who take risks
And when courage leaps from the chest
Another passes by on the sidewalk
And makes a king out of any coward
He will marry a woman in a virgin dress
And flirt with another woman through the window

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Back cover photo: Students protest against the Bolsonaro administration's education budget cuts in São Paulo, Brazil, on May 15, 2019. Bruno Rocha/Fotoarena/Sipa USA/PA Images

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