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REVIEW OF THE BOOK "CONSCIENTIZATION" BY PAULO FREIRE
REVIEW OF THE BOOK "AWARENESS" BY PAULO FREIRE

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The book *Awareness: Liberation Theory and Practice: An Introduction to Thought*, by Paulo Freire brings in 48 pages a series of reflections, divided into three parts, on different aspects of the process of raising awareness among man and society, focusing on countries that today are considered developing, especially Latin American countries.

In the first part - The man and his experience -, Paulo Freire's early life in Recife and later in Jaboatão is shown, showing that the readings that began in adolescence were important for his formation, as well as affection, dialogue and support from their parents. His arrest in 1964 is still reported, which, according to the author, happened due to the irrationalism that was plaguing the country in that historical period and which is very similar to the current period.

He also presents his participation in the Culture Circles that began in Angicos and later expanded to other parts of Brazil, a time when they also judged him as a communist just for trying to give a voice to the people. Some political groups reacted this way out of fear of losing privileges that would occur due to popular participation. This is because students trained in the Circles were critical and knew the difference between promises and their fulfillment. Some politicians supported literacy, as long as it was to increase the number of voters. However, Paulo Freire was concerned with the freedom of the oppressed through an education that was capable of making them critical of individual and collective problems.

The first part also shows part of his work during his exile in Chile, a period in which his literacy method was established in that country. Waldom Cortêz, who

was responsible for the Adult Education Planning Office in 1965,

I thought about reviewing adult literacy methods and discovered that Paulo Freire had done innovative work in Brazil, similar to what the Chilean had thought. In a planned action with the participation of several instances, coordinators were formed based on dialogue and the Freirean method. In two years, Chile received a distinction from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) that made it one of the five nations that best fought illiteracy, having calculated that it would have approximately 100,000 students and 2,000 coordinators some years later.

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The second part, entitled Literacy and Awareness, explains his literacy method in a philosophical way, showing that those involved must distance themselves from the known object to carry out critical reflection, always being aware that they are all subjects. Faced with constant and continuous reflection, man is capable of becoming more and more man and transcending “limit situations” in the search for the “untried possible”. All this, in the face of a process of awareness that starts from a naive position and moves towards a critical development in which man can think about his actions, creating and recreating his relationship with the world. Focusing on utopia as an act of announcing a humanizing structure after denouncing a dehumanizing structure.

A very interesting concept is that of Power Ideas, which would be a set of ideas that would support the educational act. In an attempt to make a linear summary of what was presented in six items, it can be stated that man begins by reflecting on his way of life and progresses towards conscious emergence to the point of intervening and changing his own reality. Through relationships with other men and with the world, and consequently with God, the concept of temporality is discovered, demonstrating its capacity, intelligence and freedom. From these relationships, man starts to produce culture, creating and recreating, transforming nature into a dialogical relationship with other men. Hence, he produces history, participating in the construction of his era and is capable of proposing changes with the arrival of new times. All this, to enable man to be a transformative subject, capable of establishing relationships with other men, creating culture and history, with the help of an authentic education that has freedom as its objective.

As for the Methodological Process, it can be said that it is presented in five phases, including the discovery of the groups' vocabulary universe, taking into account their feelings and desires; starting then to select the words following some

criteria such as syllabic richness and phoneme difficulty; to finally reach the phase of creating typical existential situations that will make sense to the groups. The fourth stage would be the preparation of indicator sheets that will serve to assist coordinators during the debates. Then, phonetic family sheets would be created according to the generating words. After preparing the material and training the teams, literacy work begins.

In the third part – Praxis of Liberation – there is the presentation of three keywords that must be relativized. The first of these is “Oppression”. Here there is a complete detail of the behavior of the oppressed, who tends to adhere to the behavior of the oppressor to the extent that they have no other model of humanity. As the oppressor sees the man who wants to free himself as a subversive, it is up to the oppressed to fight to free himself. The second word is “Dependency”. Reflecting on it, there is a consideration about the dependence of underdeveloped countries (today called developing countries) on developed countries. In the book, there is an indication that poor countries need to overcome their “limit situations” to become “beings-for-themselves”, as change must happen from within society in the search to be for themselves, instead of being for someone else, following models outside society. This is an analysis that goes from the macro to the micro – showing the reality of some Latin American nations, including Brazil – when it associates rich countries oppressing the poorest, just as the elite of these same poor countries oppress their citizens; factor that arises from this relationship between dominator and dominated. The third word is “Marginality” and it presents illiterate people as marginalized beings in various structural spheres and are forced to live in this situation because they have no option. However, in a relationship of dependence, they are actually men oppressed within a closed structure whose solution would be to free themselves from this dehumanizing structure.

Based on the same reasoning, the pedagogical model reflects the ideal of the dominator. Therefore, for the liberation of the oppressed, a pedagogy is necessary that starts from the oppressed and towards awareness, based on an education that is not neutral, that no imposition outside the people is accepted and that every action is a constant object of reflection. Therefore, education must also be liberating, it must start from dialogue in a critical process in search of humanization. Problem-based education, unlike banking education, must be concerned with critical and creative transformation based on love and dialogue.

As long as man is alienated, he will not be able to carry out authentic actions and thoughts, he will always be serving a reality that is not his, as he follows the standards expressed in the ruling society that induces him to worry more about appearing than being. The internalization of dominating models means that the dominated always treat those as myths, at the same time that they make themselves inferior. To free themselves from these bonds, they need to understand the internalized culture and then reflect on it and only then begin to reformulate, create and recreate their own identity through cultural action and cultural revolution. Awareness, made possible by these processes, by intellectual effort and by praxis, leads to a fight against dehumanization within a revolutionary project that seeks the transformation of the semi-intransitive or transitive-naive state of consciousness to critical consciousness. According to Paulo Freire, such a change could not be promoted by the right, since it cannot be utopian as it cannot offer clarity regarding the structures that serve the culture of silence and domination. Finally, the reflection that is made is about the extent to which technology serves as a liberating or alienating tool. Or to what extent specialties become “specialisms” that escape the critical rigor necessary to raise awareness among the masses and liberate themselves from oppressive forms of power.

This is certainly one of the essential reading works on the author's thoughts. From philosophical and practical foundations, it brings to reflection historical and cultural aspects of the individual, Brazilian society and Latin America, starting from the micro and through analogies it manages to expand its reasoning to cover oppressed nations. Always based on love and dialogue, the book presents the ideological side of Paulo Freire that overcomes the barriers of education and envisions a human being in its entirety, free and consciously critical.

References

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